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IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF WAR

BY

ISABELLE RIMBAUD

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

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IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF WAR

ON the 28th of July 1914 my husband and I, then living at Roche,[1] became positively convinced that the outbreak of war was imminent.

On the 30th, Captain Clenet, the author of that very illuminating pamphlet, *The German Invasion through Southern Belgium*,[2] called on us with his wife, and was astounded to hear that I had been informed, two days earlier, of the suspension of payment of the Rente. Until I told him of my part in this financial misadventure the Captain seemed assured that there was no likelihood of war with Germany, and took a sly pleasure in pooh-poohing all the arguments with which my husband Pierre met his optimism. When I had finished my story,

[1] One of the four sections of the commune of Chuffilly, Attigny canton, Vouziers arrondissement (Ardennes).

[2] Published by the "Marches de l'Est," Paris, 1912.

however, he sat up straight, and in a quite altered tone said very seriously: "If that be the case, I must see about taking up my duties again at Verdun."

We went out to accompany our visitors to the end of the street, and walked with them along the Rilly-aux-Oies road as far as the Wallart calvary. To the left, in front of us, the sun was setting, crimsoning all the sky.

Saturday, August 1.

Our niece Nelly's husband, Emile Lecourt, returned from Attigny at half-past three, bathed in perspiration and greatly upset. "It's all up; we've got to go," he cried, sinking down on our doorstep. The village folk who saw him arrive came up to question him. They all refused to believe him, though the young fellow angrily protested that he spoke the truth, and swore that the Attigny mayor's secretary had acquainted him with the official dispatch.

At this moment the tocsin rang out from the belfries of the surrounding villages and the general alarm sounded. "A fire!" said some. Consternation reigned, though people were still unwilling to credit what they heard. But the

mayors, in receipt of orders to post up the mobilisation notices, had sent cyclists into the fields to warn the harvesters, who came back with them. It was no longer possible to have any illusions as to the real state of affairs.

About half-past four our mayor drove up in a carriage from Chuffilly and took his stand in front of the house, facing the fatal poster. People questioned him anxiously, but he knew nothing except that he had been ordered to do the posting at four o'clock and, as Roche was the most remote section of the commune, he was half an hour behind time. "The poster is quite easily understood," he said; "every man liable to mobilisation has merely to consult his papers." Stupefaction and dismay prevailed, and one heard protesting cries of: "And the harvest is scarcely begun!" People could not bring themselves to admit the awful truth; those who had to go felt that they must get fuller information from the police at Attigny.

Emile has to join up at 10 a.m. on the second day after mobilisation. He is tortured by the gloomiest fears. Added to his sorrow at parting from his wife and child and father, and his unwillingness to leave his very flourish-

ing farming operations, is the sorry outlook for himself.

The unbelievers have just returned from the police station. Things are very serious; they've got to go. The young men of the field army put a good face on it, but the others . . . ! By way of comfort we tell them that mobilisation does not necessarily imply war; that Germany will no doubt think twice when she sees the French ready to stand up to her. They, poor fellows, in their distress clutch gladly at any straw of hope.

Sunday, August 2.

The mobilisation has had the effect of reminding the villagers of their religion. I noticed this at church this morning when, bending over my Book of Hours, I shuddered during the reading of the Gospel for the ninth Sunday after Whitsun: ". . . *For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest*

not the time of thy visitation" (Luke xix. 43, 44).

It is easy to understand why the populations of the east and north-east of France, the first victims of invasion, which they have experienced thrice in a century, cannot regard a threatened war with Germany from the standpoint of the inhabitants of other districts. Of course, if love of country be primarily love of one's native soil, their patriotism is deep, the more so as their land runs the heavier risks; but, like any fiercely loved possession, this patriotism is foreboding, pessimistic; and it, when wrung with anguish by the coming of all the miseries of ruined home and loss of husband or son—these belong to frontier regiments, so will they not come first under fire?—calls on the Almighty.

We must believe that prayer brings comfort, for the Ardennes country-folk have already ceased their lamentations and betaken themselves with tenfold energy to their field-work. Have they not, too, to make up for the willing hands that are now missing?

Monday, August 3.

The village becomes emptier every hour of

men under forty-eight years of age. At the same time there is a change in the moral atmosphere: hatreds die down and enemies become reconciled. There is no more slandering a neighbour, no more desire to do him an ill turn; but gentle speech instead. The fires of envy and vanity die out in look and soul. In the families of called-up men the farewells are heart-breaking, as if something irrevocable were happening; and all arrangements are made on this understanding.

Emile has gone.

Men of the field army are beginning to pass along the road.

Thursday, August 6.

On rainy days, when they cannot go into the fields to work, the boys and old men make for the strategic stations and level crossings to watch military trains being emptied or passing. These trains, which come from all parts of France, have carriages garlanded with flowers and covered with inscriptions breathing enthusiasm and defiance. The travellers, bursting with high spirits, stop their warlike songs to return the civilians' cheers. The sight of all

this exuberant youth in bright-coloured uniforms cheers the villagers' sorrowful and heavy hearts and accustoms them to the idea of war.

But, as the roundsmen who used to bring us bread, meat, and groceries on certain days call no longer, and nobody sells these commodities in Roche, we have to go into the town to buy provisions, which are reserved for emergencies. The fastenings of houses are strengthened, and hiding-places are prepared in walls or under floors for the storage of precious possessions.

The postal service, which had ceased, has now been resumed. The postman has just brought the agent of the *Petit Journal* some copies two or three days old, in which we read of the declaration of war, the violation of Belgium by Germany, and the first invasions of our territory by enemy patrols.

Friday, August 7.

The war of 1870 is the standard by which coming events are gauged. I have never yet heard a countryman or a countrywoman who witnessed that war say: "We shall win; we shall hold the enemy on the frontier. Let us get on with our work and not worry; we shall

enjoy our harvest all right." These poor folk in their heart of hearts are so fully convinced that they will be invaded that they say, on the contrary: "The Prussians did not behave so badly at Roche in 1870, after burning Voncq and taking hostages. Why should they behave worse now? In 1870 we certainly suffered from hunger, cold, fright and sickness; but the moment we gave the Germans something to eat they ceased harming us." I maintain that it is not so certain that the Ardennes will be invaded on this occasion; that our soldiers can put up a good fight; that the fighting will be in Belgium, and that we shall win. They look at me with wonder in their eyes, sigh, and move away, shaking their heads.

Saturday, August 8.

The well-to-do families of this district who are kept here by professional ties, but own motor-cars, have sent away their children to safe places in the west or south of France. All our acquaintances who were on holiday, or have places in Paris, have gone, leaving their properties in the care of servants. Among

them is the lady who owns the Château de Roche.

For our part, though our friends implore us to go back to Paris, we have no intention of doing so. My husband is convinced that, if the Germans get as far as here, they will go still farther and lay siege to Paris, where the risks would be greater. Moreover, we should be ashamed to desert our humble neighbours in the hour of danger, and go far away from our two nieces—especially from Nelly, who is so young and, after we had gone, would feel terribly lonely in the farm attached to our house, though her stepfather is with her.

Since mobilisation began my husband has taken upon himself the office of assistant to the mayor, an almost deaf and very nervous old man of seventy-nine. He has solved certain problems, such as the distribution of relief among poor families who have lost their means of support, getting supplies for the inhabitants, and many other operations rendered still more delicate by the suspicious nature of the peasants; for example, the depositing at the town hall of all arms, a thing for which 1870 furnishes no precedent.

Sunday, August 9.

The artillery is going through towards the north and north-east, to Grandpré and Le Chesne. The batteries do not halt in Roche, but the villagers run up to see them pass, and offer the gunners flowers, fruit and small delicacies. We should like to have more to give. We smile at them while wishing them good luck, yet tears rise to our eyes, and it is difficult to prevent them falling.

We have been told that the French have crossed the Alsatian frontier and reached Mulhouse. The fighting must have been stubborn and bloody, but the peasants are none the less encouraged by the *Petit Journal's* pæans of victory.

Monday, August 10.

I went to Attigny to get some drugs, but the chemists have all been mobilised, and their shops were shut. The entrance to the town was barricaded with carts, and officials demanded passes. I found that no more provisions were to be had, as the shops were empty, and for the most part closed. Round the open-air requisitions office in the square, opposite the

town hall, and near the remains of Wittikind's palace, were picketed the horses brought in from the neighbourhood.

Tuesday, August 11.

The farmers' wives are working with might and main to reap and gather in the corn, lending each other a hand. Troops continue to go through. Out in the silence of the country sharp ears can hear the noise of cannon.

Does this come from gunnery practice at Châlons camp, or from the battle raging in Lorraine, or from the bombardment of the Liége forts by the heavy German artillery?

Wednesday, August 12.

The weather is very hot. Soldiers are coming in and asking for refreshment. We give them wine *ad lib.* Motor-buses drive through, still bearing the names of their Parisian routes. Like the soldiers, they are decked with flowers. They halt, and the drivers join their companions, who are having a drink in the houses. Not one of these men knows how the war is going.

Thursday, August 13.

"The Belgians are still doing wonders, and the Liége forts still holding out. Our troops remain in possession of Haute Alsace. Enemy thrusts in the neighbourhood of Spincourt and Manonvillers have been repulsed. The Kaiser reckoned to be in Paris by the 11th, but our troops are crossing the frontier; our two wings are in Belgium and Alsace; our concentration has been completed, and the Russians have entered Prussia." This is what the papers to hand to-day give us to think about. So things are going very nicely. Yet Spincourt is in France. Are we then to think that this admission has no significance, and that there is nothing in the rumour which has reached us—goodness knows how!—to the effect that the Germans crossed our frontier in large numbers several days ago, that Longwy is as good as captured, Luneville threatened, and Pont-à-Mousson destroyed; that the enemy has crossed the Meuse at several points, and that half of Belgium has been over-run? People from the districts where fighting is going on even hint that a German army is

approaching Dinant. Now, Dinant is much nearer our Department than is Liége, so what is one to believe? We don't want to be deceived either by the papers or by the scaremongers.

To-day the sky has the grey colour of great heat. A column of infantry enters the village by the Attigny road. The soldiers halt, pile arms, and lay their kits on the ground, while their officers make their arrangements outside our house. One battalion will go into billets at Chuffilly; the other will stay here. My husband offers his services to the captain and quartermaster responsible for the billeting, gives them all necessary information, and goes off with them. While these billeting preliminaries are in progress the men scatter among the houses and ask us to fill their cans, offering money, which we refuse. They are Normans, and would like some cider, but the only decent drink we have to offer them is wine. A soldier comes and asks me to let him have a room for a sick officer, and I am only too glad to oblige. But the captain returns with my husband and, after casting an eye round to see how the rooms lie, takes one for himself and gives another to his second lieutenant. The rooms selected

are front rooms with windows opening on the village square at the crossing of the Vouziers, Attigny, Rilly-aux-Oies, and Voncq roads, which will be guarded by sentries. The part of the house occupied by my niece and her stepfather and the farm buildings accommodate a section of machine-gunners. These troopers are reservists from the Saint Lô depôt, well-to-do men and fathers of families, most of them. As soon as they get settled in, they go into the village to walk off their longing for home and the old life.

Only one of their officers, the captain quartered on us, belongs to the active army. The lieutenant bears a distinguished name. The second lieutenant, a theological student, talks to us about Péguy and Claudel. The officer in command, quartered at the château, is a retired colonial.

The people living at the upper end of the village come with complaints of having too many men billeted on them, though the folk at the west end have none at all. The captain, to whom the complaint is made, at first takes no notice, and when the villagers persist and make my husband an intermediary to air their

grievance, merely explains that the distribution was thus arranged in order that he might have all his men handy and under his eye.

Friday, August 14.

At daybreak I see the men performing their ablutions in the ditch by the roadside. I recognise among them the quartermaster of yesterday, and guess that he is a priest. On acquainting Pierre with this, he asks the second lieutenant, and I prove to be right, for the quartermaster is a curé, and the battalion includes another ordained priest.

Nothing transpires, though the villagers are much put about. Do they really not know whither and when they will go, and why they are stopping so long? The officers say that they are awaiting orders and holding themselves ready to move off. They are as brothers or fathers to their men, addressing them as equals, cheering them, keeping an eye on their equipment, helping them with advice or, if need be, with cash. Not a shout is heard, not a song, not a bugle-call: instructions and orders are given without raising the voice.

In the clear light of morning the machine-

gunners, shouldering their guns, move off eastwards along the Rilly and Voncq roads to practise in the fields. No doubt the business is only pretence, yet it suggests slaughter to us, and the idea comes into our heads to ask the soldier-priests to celebrate the Mass of the Assumption at Roche in the open air. When we put it before the commander he takes it up enthusiastically.

About two o'clock, after Pierre has gone in the blazing heat to Sainte-Vaubourg to get the necessaries for to-morrow's Mass from the presbytery there, the house is invaded by some neighbours. "Isn't Madame Emilie with you?" they ask. "She's in a nice fix: the Uhlans are at Saint Lambert!" (Saint Lambert is less than half a league from Mont-de-Jeux, with which it forms a commune.) I rush off for information to the officers, who calm my fears. It may be only my anxiety, but I seem to detect disquietude behind their calm assurance. I explain the situation of my niece, who has been separated from two of her children and is travelling on foot with the third. "This lady," confesses the commander, "will be well advised to go back home without delay. To put your

mind quite at ease I will give her an escort with a password to accompany her to the Croix-de-Wallart post, where my personal responsibility ends and she will be passed on." (The Wallart calvary stands in the middle of the Rilly-aux-Oies road, where it is crossed by the Roman road running from Trèves to Reims.)

On my husband's return from Sainte-Vaubourg with the materials for the sacrament, the officers select a site for the altar, and the two soldier-priests, aided by some hospital orderlies, —who also are apparently in Orders,—begin to erect a temporary altar in the château courtyard. I contribute some fine linen, napkins, candles, and vases, and, on the soldiers hesitating to put nails in such fine material, I ask them laughingly to be quick about it if nails be required. I should like to collect on that altar all the cherished things I possess, to sanctify them for evermore. I took down our great carved wooden crucifix to be placed over the improvised tabernacle. A strong young girl with mystical eyes and mind, to whom I am greatly attached, comes after her hard day's work in the harvest field to help me arrange the flowers. This finished, we go in search

of a little unfermented sacramental wine, and get a bottle of it out of some old peasants who are the only people in the village owning a vineyard. All preparations are now complete. Night has fallen, and the soldiers are confessing to the warrior-priests under the star-spangled sky in the fields, in the gardens, in the farms, or wherever they may be.

On returning to the house I find the officers conversing with my husband. They seem calm enough, yet behind the lieutenant's literary talk I fancy I detect some more serious and pressing preoccupation. The captain talks freely; but his glances wander over the heads of his questioners to the black rectangle of the open window, and he keeps an ear open for noises outside, and his forehead is wrinkled with thought.

Towards midnight there is loud knocking on the front door. The cook and orderlies asleep in the kitchen on the ground floor do not wake, so I open the shutters of my first-floor room and ask who is there. It is a cyclist with a message for the captain. I go downstairs and take the man in to the officer, and while he opens the envelope sitting in his bed I hold

the candle above his head in my shaking hand to enable him to see. After reading the message, the captain merely says: "It's all right; we shall celebrate the Mass to-morrow morning." Then to the messenger: "Dismiss!"

I return to my room.

Saturday, August 15.

Although it is still very early when I go to the farm opposite the château to fetch the milk, I can see through the gate, at the farther end of an arch of greenery, white against the whiteness of the candle-starred linen, the Host elevated to heaven by two hands. At the foot of the altar the military server prostrates himself, and behind him a small group of kneeling and self-absorbed soldiers are engaged in prayer. It is the first or the second Low Mass.

At eight o'clock the château garden is thronged for the High Mass. The officers have reserved chairs on the left side of the altar for the village people. The ceremony proceeds under the branches of the lofty trees, in which birds sing to the solemn accompaniment of the wind. The flowers in the beds

give off their perfume. The officiating priest is a pale young man with ascetic features and an ecstatic look. The server is our guest, the second lieutenant: he might be one of the Magi in the triptych, at once humble and proud, and his gestures are hieratic, like those of the priest. We village civilians must cut a poor figure beside these warriors. The *Credo* is intoned by men's voices; then comes the Elevation. The strangely heavy silence is broken now and then by the swallows' twittering, and suddenly from the distance is wafted the growl of cannon. My neighbour bends towards me. "Do you hear them?" she whispers. Can I hear them! But now comes the Administration. The officers, in order of rank, approach the altar with folded arms, kneel, and receive the Host. They are followed by the soldiers, then by the humble village women. Next, the celebrant turns towards his brethren and, with eyes raised to the heavens from which no wall separates him, asks the blessing of God on those present. The *Magnificat* rises with the fervour of deep feeling from the throats of all these men whom the cannon summons to the holocaust.

The air becomes hot. At dinner the officers scrutinise the country from their table in front of the open window. "Are you aware," says the captain to my husband, "that your house would make a splendid post of defence, which could easily be organised? From here one can see four kilometres in the Vouziers direction. Your dormer windows command the Argonne and Champagne roads and the river Aisne. But unfortunately it would be a perfect mark for artillery as well as a defence and observation post." A moment later, returning to a question raised two days before, he adds: "For the last three days I have had to keep my lot in instant readiness, as we were expecting a warning; but now there is no more reason for alarm." The lieutenant seems disappointed, and asks hotly to be brought to close quarters with the Germans, as he is simply longing to have it out with them.

The meal over, the commander comes in for a chat with these gentlemen, and thanks us warmly for our hospitality. We ask him what he really thinks about the war. His reply is a plaintive note of interrogation, which tails off into an appeal to the Virgin Mary for help.

According to Ardennes tradition the Feast of the Assumption falls on a stormy day, and it looks as if this saying will prove correct, since the sound of thunder is commencing. However, the battalion cooks count upon another afternoon of rest, and have put the soup to boil in the housekeeper's pots and coppers on fires lit in the open air.

At two o'clock a cyclist arrives with instructions to move off in twenty minutes. The order is passed round, and the kettles are emptied on the fires to put them out. The men will have to be satisfied with taking the half-cooked meat away with them. Conversations between natives and troopers are broken off. The soldier becomes a mere soldier again, and without grumbling bustles about to get his kit and equipment together. Sections and companies are then lined up on the road, and the command "Forward!" is given. The column swings northwards along the Rilly road, flanked by the officers who, with swords drawn and with eyes searching the distance, lead it away into the heart of the storm.

Just as he is about to mount, the captain comes back to us and tells us not to be sur-

prised if there should be a great deal of noise during the night, as three army corps will be passing through the village.

The battalions billeted at Méry and Chuffilly have rejoined that from Roche. They march along behind it, fearless, almost gay, their rifles, caps, capes, horses and waggons all decked out with flowers. Amid the crash of the thunder, under the dark, lightning-riven clouds, more infantry detachments move along in the dust, and more, and still more. At five o'clock, when there is a break in the passage of the troops, a furious gale springs up. The clouds burst and the heavens discharge themselves in torrents of rain and hail. Poor soldiers! Then the wind grows colder and the fury of the heavens dies down; the deluge lessens and changes into a chilly fog. We can still hear distant rumblings, which may or may not be the thunder of guns. As night comes on, more troops arrive in serried columns — cavalry, infantry, artillery, engineers, trains of vehicles. The unnumbered hosts of France push ever towards the north-east in silence, through the incessant rain and thick darkness. If a soldier thinks of asking the name of the village from

the people who have stopped to see the procession his officer curtly bids him be quiet. So the army passes on and on and on, as we watch.

About eleven the cold damp drives us indoors, but even there the rumbling of artillery pursues and holds us. It seems to me that the tumult we hear is an endless funeral knell, and that these hammer-like, hurried footsteps are those of all France marching to the Last Judgment.

Sunday, August 16.

This morning the sky is bright—too bright—and the wind cold. The rain has been so heavy that the steep, newly-metalled road in front of our house is washed clean and shows hardly a sign of last night's procession. Villagers who have not been to bed are chatting on their doorsteps. One of them describes the pontoons, "bright as silver," which went by on long cars, and the bridgemen riding horses which drew other cars laden with beams, forges, etc.

All the roads within sight of our windows are blocked this afternoon with the moving hosts of war. In front of our door unrolls

without ceasing the motley, many-voiced ribbon of the multifarious supply trains of several army corps.

Monday, August 17.

My husband is unwell. I sent to Attigny for the doctor, and he soon came. It is a case of double bronchitis, with high fever. I wonder whether it is due to emotion, or to the dust raised by the armies, or to standing out in the rain yesterday evening. Roche and the neighbourhood are suffering from a regular epidemic of influenza, enteritis and headache. I have a bad cold myself.

Tuesday, August 18.

As my husband apparently is worse, I have summoned the doctor again urgently. He increases the strength of the medicine and prescribes a champagne diet. I feel much perturbed and forget about the war, in the grip of the insuperable fear of seeing Pierre die. I feel remorse for my unwillingness to leave Roche and return to Paris a fortnight ago. Had we gone, this possibly fatal attack of bronchitis would never have come on, or at

least at Paris I should have had a doctor, a chemist and a nurse close at hand. Here, on the contrary, one has to make a round journey of eight kilometres without being sure even then of finding the doctor, who is very busy owing to the mobilisation of his confrères, and the druggists' shops are closed.

Wednesday, August 19.

My invalid is not better, but worse. I don't know what to do. I have to look after him single-handed; I can't get any one to help me, as everybody is busy in the fields. I tremble, and the continuous rumbling of guns on the horizon puts the finishing touch to my agony.

The stream of armies seems to have dried up. Only a few men pass through now, and service corps motors climb or descend the hill at long intervals. The silence leaves me all the more alone with my trouble.

Thursday, August 20.

Pierre's temperature is rather lower to-day, and he is asleep. He breathes painfully in his deep slumber, and I listen closely. Oh that I might breathe in the sickness and free him from it!

Friday, August 21.

Pierre's bronchitis is less pronounced, and has given place to attacks of coughing and discharges of phlegm. I begin to hope again, and the doctor when sounding him seems less anxious to-day, and for the first time discusses the war's happenings with my husband.

The doctor, now an old man, has at present several cantons to look after, in addition to attending to the staff of a long section of the Eastern Railways. So he has a great deal of travelling and talking to do. From what he gathers, he does not believe that the military operations are at all as represented in the papers or even in the official bulletins.

Trains full of Belgian emigrants are passing through Amagne (a railway junction about fifteen kilometres from Roche), but there is no time or wish to question these worn travellers. However, judging from the few words he has had with them, the doctor entertains no doubts about the atrocities which the papers have denounced and we so far have doubted. The crimes committed by the Germans seem to surpass in both number and horror those of

the printed reports. We gather that the doctor—though he does not admit it—expects our country to be invaded. His duty is to stick to his post till the last moment. His family has been provided for, and the motor-car is ready for emergencies. Seeing Pierre's weakness, he blames us for not returning to our Paris establishment some time ago. He tells us that the Germans are taking hostages everywhere, maltreating them, — when they don't kill them,—compelling them to march, and sending them as prisoners to Germany without any consideration for age or health. "Still," he finishes up, "although there are a few trains to Attigny more at the disposal of civilian passengers than formerly, for the time being this bronchitis makes a move impossible."

Saturday, August 22.

Nelly is bursting with joy at the prospect of going to Reims to-morrow, along with several other wives of called-up men, to see her husband. It is not the first time that one or other of these ladies has made a similar excursion. They take linen and food to their husbands in the depôts or the forts, and return

next day a little comforted. Thanks to these visits and to the fact that so far there has been no bad news of the men from these parts, and that scarcely any more troops go through the village, we are beginning to find that in the main the war is not so bad after all. We should like it to keep as it is. The weather is now fine and warm, there is work to be done on the harvest, and we no longer feel upset. Physical fatigue only serves to quiet the mind.

Sunday, August 23.

The growling of cannon from the north and east is intense. It would be childish to-day to think that this is mere practice at Châlons camp. The rumbling is incessant and makes me shudder from head to foot, as I think of the many men lying dead on the battlefield.

The doctor comes and reports my husband better. I still regret not having left Roche, but, as I can now see a prospect of starting soon, my conscience is quieted.

A paper that has just come in informs me, among other things, of the massacres at Louvain, where hostages and women have been shot. The bulletin, now three days old,

says that the enemy have crossed the Meuse near Dinant, that the Liége and Namur forts are still holding out, and that a great battle in Belgium is imminent. The noise of guns which we could hear so plainly would seem to indicate that the battle is in progress. O God, give us the victory!

Monday, August 24.

The doctor has allowed Pierre to get up for an hour. He brings us bad news about the war. According to his information, the fighting in Belgium has gone badly for us, and the Germans are near Sedan. He gives a harrowing account of the trains filled with fugitives. We must expect at any moment that the trains from Charleville will cease running and the railways be cut. So our hope of getting away soon has lessened. When will my husband be fit to travel? The doctor cannot say.

The sunshine is pleasant, the air fresh and sweet-scented. Some soldiers have come to the house for refreshment. They say they are Bretons from the far west, that their regiment must have been the last ordered to Belgium.

The guns keep thundering away. Now and

then we hear a terrible din in the distance, as if a town had been struck and were crumbling to pieces.

After the Bretons some strange groups pass us. They seem to be gangs of the Flemish beetroot-pickers who at this time of year usually come here to gather the harvest. But these Flemings have not the nonchalant air and merry look of the Flemings of earlier days; they walk quickly, with their heads down, all covered with dust. We remark on the great number of beetroot-pickers moving. The Ardennes peasants don't like these strangers much, and no questions are asked them, especially as they are in a hurry and can hardly understand French. Is this the beginning of the Belgian exodus along our roads?

Nelly returned at about four from Reims with her travelling companions. They bring terrifying rumours about the war. They saw packed trains of pitifully excited people: the stations were filled with desperate-looking emigrants waiting their turn to be moved, God knows whither. What can be gathered from these poor creatures' tales goes to confirm the stories of atrocities given in the papers. The

inhabitants have been raided by the Germans, led away into captivity, tortured, shot, or even placed as screens in front of attacking troops. Children have been separated from their parents, have been lost and died in the woods; babies at the breast have been killed in their mothers' arms; small boys have had their ears cut off, little girls their hands. The passage of the enemy is marked everywhere by pillage, burnings and destruction. The mortal horror of battle surpasses imagination; the Meuse runs with blood; one can ford rivers over corpses. The Sambre near Charleroi has become blocked by the piles of bodies and overflowed, inundating the meadows with its reddened waters. Givet and Sedan have been captured and Mézières is on the point of falling. Must we believe all these tales? Is it not likely that the fugitives have given way to a panic caused by isolated facts which have been exaggerated by the imagination?

Thursday, August 25.

The firing is coming nearer. I rose early this morning. It is fine, and the ground is heavily bedewed. Against the rising sun, just

as in a transparency, I see a luxurious carriage and pair coming into the village by the Voncq cross-road. It stops in the square and the travellers get out—wealthy folk evidently: an old man wearing in his buttonhole the rosette of the Legion of Honour, an old lady in rich but rumpled clothes, and two maids. The coachman remains on the box. All of them seem to be half-frozen. The gentleman and lady look at once proud and humiliated, so no one dares to question them; yet each of us has a presentiment that these are the forerunners of a terrible and decisive disaster. We are all the less inclined to interrogate them because the lady has asked to be allowed to buy something to eat and we have had to refuse her. They go off on foot towards Chuffilly, doubtless to restore their circulation. At a sign from his master the coachman starts his horses and follows them slowly, but without our asking him finds time to hint that his horses are worn out, as they left Sedan yesterday evening and have been travelling all night. "Many of the people of that town," he adds, "have fled."

This luxurious turn-out is not yet out of sight when, in confirmation of our fears, more

families appear on the Attigny road, pass through the village, and disappear in the same direction as the others. These poor people are going into exile on foot, some of them turned off overcrowded trains. They walk with bent backs, almost all of them carrying packages, and urged by terror they push on and on. We feel that this exodus will never cease.

My husband wanted to get up, so here he is at our bedroom window. In comes the doctor, to confirm the news brought from Reims by the village women. He has heard exactly the same details from many of the emigrants. The trains from Attigny to Amagne, he tells us, have ceased to run. As things are, any one who wishes can get on to the last trains, with or without paying a fare. At Attigny station there is a regular riot, people fighting and struggling to enter the carriages. A return journey can't be guaranteed. The crowd contains people of North and Central Ardennes as well as Belgians.

About noon a detachment of sappers arrives by the Rilly road, followed by sundry mysterious materials, including a burning forge drawn by horses. The men go slowly through the

village, looking right and left, and on reaching the little bridge across the Loire they halt, and, after examining the place, take what seem to be boxes from their waggons—so the boys following them report—and set to work to fasten them to the masonry of the bridge.

An old friend from Rilly-aux-Oies calls. We put to her the question which everybody is asking himself to-day—Is she going to leave? Departure means the abandonment of cherished nooks and corners, of the remembrances and all that ties old people to life. The thing makes one revolt passionately and insult those who are already fleeing, because one is enraged at having to face the same necessity: calling them cowards and penniless folk in search of free lodgings, etc. But that does not prevent the unfortunate emigrants defiling in an endless procession along the road, like figures on a cinematograph screen. We draw our visitor's attention to this. It upsets her, and she says good-bye.

Our notary's car has pulled up at the door. I sent him yesterday evening by the doctor the rough draft of my will, which I made on the night of the 15th. I go down quickly to welcome him. Perspiration trickles from his

forehead; he has come at top speed, for minutes are not to be wasted in times like these. In a few words he informs me of the rights and duties of testators, and the way he speaks makes me think that this is the sort of language he uses when called in to learn the last wishes of the dying.

We go upstairs to my husband and talk about the war. The notary informs us that all the stations on the Amagne line, including Attigny, are now closed. The Aisne bridge has been mined; so too have those at Rilly, Semuy, and Voncq. Pierre points out the probability of a battle in this district, to force the passage of the Aisne, and draws our attention to the fact that the plain in which we are is surrounded by useful heights. The notary agrees with him. Still, though he is resolved not to expose himself and his family needlessly to the risks of bombardment and invasion, he will put off leaving Attigny till the last possible moment. His important professional documents at present are safe enough.[1]

[1] We learnt from a person repatriated in April 1915 that all this notary's papers were flung into the street and scattered during the first days of the German occupation.

Wednesday, August 26.

The guns have been thundering all night—from three points of the compass, we are told. They come nearer and nearer. The footfall of the cavalry rings like thick hail on the hard road, and blends with the rumbling of the supply columns. About 7 a.m. infantry comes in by the Rilly and Voncq roads. These men have made long marches, retiring southwards from the point to which they had been sent. As soon as they have had a short rest, they will be off to Champagne. They are hot and thirsty. We have nothing left in our cellars, so my neighbours and I fill buckets at the wells and cisterns, and the soldiers come and get the water in their cans and bottles. After drinking, they fling themselves down under the walls and hedges. They have not been under fire, though at one time they got mixed up with some troops that had done some fighting. These explained to them the reasons of the defeat.

. . . . . .

"Also, they were taken in by the enemy's mode of warfare. The Germans dig deep

holes to hide themselves in, and cover them with straw, branches and grass so cleverly that we should never suspect their existence. These earthworks are fenced round with almost invisible wires, and when we come within range and stumble over the wires they fire and bring into action their many machine-guns, concealed like themselves. So we were wiped out without seeing as much as a spiked helmet. Can you wonder if our second lines, seeing this slaughter of comrades mown down without striking a blow, were seized with panic?"

The postman comes up and joins the group, listening to the talk and being questioned in turn. He has no letters or papers for any one. The verbal news which he brings bears out what the notary told us yesterday—stations closed, railways cut or about to be cut; Mézières, Charleville, Fort Ayvelles and Sedan evacuated and captured or as good as captured. "Ah!" he exclaims, "those heavy guns at Ayvelles. Their mere firing was to shake the earth and smash all the windows within a radius of a dozen kilometres—and they are not even in place!" He adds that

the General Staff, which went up north from Grandpré ten days ago, returned last night. The country people shiver as they listen. Remonstrances are heard: "You are a scare-monger, postman; you are laughing at us." "You will see soon enough whether it is mere talk!" At anyrate he has had orders to cease his round and to block the slit of the pillar-box. That done, he jumps on his cycle without calling at any more houses, and rides off as fast as he can for Chuffilly, catching and overtaking the troops, now in motion again.

The village square is hardly free of the soldiers when cries begin to rise from the group of villagers, cries of pain, indignation, and rage. This time the truth has blinded them like a flash of lightning. They break into passionate complaints: "How we have been made fun of, lulled and gulled by the papers! And this wretched Government, which hadn't the sense to take measures for defence; those dirty politicians, who were only any good for gilding the pill and making fun of the priests. A pack of slackers, fit only for corrupting our youth and spreading scandal in Paris! What's to become of us? Our duties

hold us fast to the soil, and now there's the harvest; and we don't know what will happen to our grain and our cattle! If only the Government had taken steps to put all this wealth in safety! So it will be for the King of Prussia that our women and men and old folk have worked their arms off day and night to get in the wheat and look after the cattle; for William that our men, at the cost of God knows what labour and sacrifices, have managed to establish by selection one of the best breeds of draught horses; for gorging his army that we have filled our meadows and stables with fat beasts and heavy-uddered cows? So that's what we get for all our trouble and expense in improving cultivation and renewing our agricultural wealth." The group is in rebellion, inflamed by its own words.

. . . . . .

Some women, now advanced in years, relate what the German occupation was like in 1870–71, recalling the threats of death, the burnings, the cruelties, hunger, typhus, smallpox, Voncq three-parts burnt, strong men rushing to hide in the osier beds, and discovered and dragged off as hostages. "Are

we to see those bad times over again? Surely it is not fair that the same people should always suffer by the war and be robbed without redress?"[1] But of a sudden a grumbling voice remarks that the dew is off the grass and the sun is now well up, so it is time to be off to the fields.

So tenacious is the habit of working on the land that every one goes home to fetch his sickle or scythe. To these people to go into their fields is a physical necessity; surely no serfs were ever more closely tied to the land! The true peasant is sceptical about everything that has not to do with nature, the succession of the seasons, and the special work to be done in each season; he cannot manage to take anything else seriously. He goes so far as not to believe even what he says himself, not his own thoughts, not what he sees or has never seen. So it is that calm falls again on the village even within hearing of the guns.

Soon after this little disturbance I run against the agent of the *Petit Journal*, a free-

[1] In 1871 war damages were not compensated, though by way of assistance people were indemnified to the extent of a tenth part of their losses.

thinker, who with shouts of laughter asks me if I set any store by the news to hand this morning. Five minutes' thought have sufficed to put *him* on his guard against the postman's tales. He protests that he doesn't believe a word of them, and goes quietly about his business. I reply gently: "The Germans will be here in three or four days." He laughs loudly and passes on, but not without first bringing it to my notice that the aeroplanes are not now going "up"—that is, northwards—but "down"—southwards—and fly so high that one can hardly see or hear them.

About noon a curious column of civilians goes through—navvies and railway employees, escorted by a few soldiers. With bags hanging at their side, red with heat and smothered in dust, the navvies march in some sort of order, pick and shovel on their shoulders; behind them come the railwaymen like a wayward flock of black rams. One of these last, whose parents live at Roche, steps out of the ranks and comes up to us. He tells us that the column is made up of auxiliaries from Fort Ayvelles and employees from the Eastern Railway shops at Mohon. All are being

evacuated and taken to a rallying-point at Vouziers.

Every hour the stream of emigrants increases. Now it is not only foot-passengers. Heavy vehicles pass by, laden with women and children seated on bedding, trunks, or parcels, followed by crowds of girls and old men escorted by young men riding cycles. Everybody has a troubled look and a drunken gait. If they be drunk, it is with fright. Their eyes still see the battlefield and the burnings; their ears still hear the cries of the dying. They describe the adventures of their flight in words that ramble, so deeply are they moved. They are from Charleville, Sedan and other boroughs and villages in that district, abandoning everything with the one object of saving their own and their children's lives and their daughters' honour. An old fellow who has pulled up a waggon piled with poor creatures asks me for a bucket of water for his horse. Like the rest, he has a wild eye and a tottering gait. While his animal is drinking I question him, and he tells me that he is from Belgium, from near Tirlemont. From the pastures where he worked he saw his land

being invaded by hordes more numerous than the leaves of a century-old oak. He watched the burning of his village and house, and when he saw his sons making off at the run he mounted the first of his nineteen horses at grass that he could catch, the colt named "The Boy," which he had with him. He then wandered about without falling in with his sons. At Gespunsart he got the loan of the harness and cart, and is now engaged in moving emigrants. Where is he taking them to? He has no idea. He keeps ahead of the retreating French army and will stop only when it stops. When I ask him whether one should believe the stories of atrocities, his face becomes still more haggard and he trembles more than ever. "What I have seen, lady," he says, "is so horrible that I couldn't possibly speak of it. Yes, indeed, it was too dreadful, too dreadful!"

Greatly moved, I go back into the house to join my husband, who is still confined to his room. The doctor calls and asks my invalid whether he has made up his mind to stay at Roche. "Do you, as a doctor, give me permission to leave?" he asks.

"No, not as yet. Still, you are progressing.

I think, however, that our armies will hold the enemy in check for some days to come; and, as you know, railway travelling has become very difficult. To reach Paris you would have to be driven quickly to Amagne or Rethel and wait patiently in one of those stations for an overcrowded train, in which you would probably have to be satisfied with a place in a cattle-truck, and which would take twenty-four hours at least to reach its destination. I can't see you embarking on a venture of that kind in your present state of bad health and nerve trouble."

The doctor is obviously right, and the best thing to do is to get ready for receiving the Germans.

After the doctor had gone, I summoned Nelly's stepfather and addressed him as follows: "Please go to Attigny, to the mason we employ, and tell him that he *must* come to-morrow at latest to unblock the partition between our rooms." If my messenger uses the same tone as I did, I am sure that the mason will be here all right. With my niece's help, I am making the curtain for hiding the doorway leading from one room to the other.

When evening comes I feel simply worn out and want to lie down. But how can I rest when the guns keep growling and the rough macadam under my window rings with the rumbling of the supply trains of an army known to be in retreat?

Thursday, August 27.

While I am still in bed there is a loud rumbling which shakes the house—more of the motor omnibuses which for some days past have been going to a place about twenty kilometres south of here for supplies.

Pierre is anxious to get strong again quickly, so he rises and goes downstairs early. He is hardly settled in his arm-chair when the step-father of our niece at Mont-de-Jeux comes in with farewells from himself and Emilie, as they are about to leave. The news dismays us. "What made you come to this decision?" we ask. "The lord of the manor at Mont-de-Jeux, a Staff officer, had arranged to send a signal to his wife should it be necessary to clear out. The signal has come and the lady has warned me. She is off to-day to rejoin her seven children in Brittany."

"Now, look here; what do you, as one who fought in '70, think of the present military operations?"

"I can't form an opinion, as the real facts are evidently kept back from the public. If I had only myself to think of I should, in spite of the trouble due to my wound of 1870, have enlisted, even as a private; but when my son[1] left to join his regiment he placed his wife and children in my care. So I stayed, and it is my duty to get all these people into a safe place. Emilie can hardly resign herself to leaving; poor girl, it is terrible grief to her to have to give up her house and habits. It took a lot of reasoning to persuade her."

"How will you go?"

"On foot."

"On foot! with the three little boys?"

"Yes; until we reach a station open to travellers."

"And what are you going to do about your animals?"

"They will have to shift for themselves. We shall turn the pig loose and open the doors

[1] Severely wounded and reported missing at Verdun, May 29, 1916.

of the dove-cot, poultry-house and rabbit-hutch."

"Where are you going to?"

"We don't know. Perhaps to Brittany."

In the afternoon the mason arrives and opens out the blocked door in one of the partition walls. We fix up the curtain, which runs on a rod. At one time the building was all one house; now, in case of need, my niece and her stepfather will be able to take refuge with us, or *vice versa*. The ground floor has bars on all the windows, and double doors, so this is a fortress—a poor kind of fortress indeed, but a fortress for all that.

At about three in the afternoon an endless military supply train begins to pass through Roche, towards the south. It is made up mostly of vehicles requisitioned in all parts of France—vehicles of every imaginable shape and size, bearing all sorts of names, and with all kinds of teams, driven by soldiers or civilians and escorted by cavalry. And here the returning motor-buses—one hundred and twenty went through this morning—meet the convoy, raising clouds of dust which settle and smother everything. For an hour nothing

is visible, and our ears are racked with the clatter.

The convoy is still passing when night falls. The villagers, now returned from the fields, watch this curious procession with unfriendly eyes. For a couple of sous they would hoot it. If a thirsty member of the escort asks for a can of water, they surlily point to the fountain where he may draw some for himself; and if he tarries there too long with his comrades they are told sharply not to foul the water. To the unsophisticated peasant mind a retreating army has failed to defend the country, so it is made to feel that it deserves no consideration.

The Roche landowners are obstinate beyond understanding. I admit that this obstinacy has its virtues. Certain invasion is at their doors; but it does not prevent them devoting themselves to the harvest, and they do not even see that their very first duty is to save what they have in their houses. My husband asked them: "Why do you persist in working yourselves to death in the fields? Don't you see that *you* won't benefit from all this labour? Think rather of measures for saving your livestock

and furniture—in a word, of saving what you already have. You won't? Do you want me to try to warn the district officer, so that he may requisition it? You don't? Well, I think it is now too late to do so. You will have to rely on yourselves for saving all this stuff. Fill up your carts and waggons and lorries with utensils, tools, and grain; harness your horses to your vehicles and machines, and off with you! Collect the mares, foals, cattle, cows and sheep in droves, and drive the good creatures before you farther and farther south. You can sort them out later on."

"And how shall we feed our animals during the journey?"

"You can pasture them in the fields near the roads."

"We shall have summonses served on us."

"Bah! let them be served. The service which you will render France by taking my advice will make the Government quash any legal proceedings."

"We will think it over," they say. "Perhaps we can manage it. In any case we must stay a bit longer, owing to the harvest. . . ."

The fact is that at bottom they have some

extraordinary illusions about the realities of war. Though the thundering of guns keeps getting nearer, they still regard invasion as a remote contingency and war as a luxury, a sport of Governments, for which are used strong arms which might much more advantageously be at the plough-handles. When, a few days ago, they cheered the soldiers as they went through, it was merely a way of paying for the lively spectacle they afforded; and even then they could not help thinking that this was a very expensive business and one that wasted a lot of their time. Better-hearted people thought it a generous action to offer the men some rather sharp cider or a bottle of wine diluted with a pailful of water. These were men — oftener women—with sons or husbands called to the colours. This kind of generosity contains an element of self-interestedness, behind which lies a thought of reciprocity. "We should be glad to think," they argue, "that other folk did the same for our people." I don't believe that a single one of our peasants has ever pictured to himself soldiers facing death on the battlefield, or has ever said to himself that in a few days this,

that, or the other may be dead after passing through the horrors of fear, of killing and seeing men killed. . . .

Wednesday, August 28.

The firing is getting louder and louder, and redoubled in violence at 2 a.m. I have been up since daybreak and positively can see the air vibrating. Fighting is going on at Raucourt, Launois, and Signy-l'Abbaye, about twenty-five kilometres from here. In all directions one can see the movement and bustle which prevails in the fighting zone of a modern army—detachments of regiments of all arms, officers' cars, hospital equipment, service corps waggons. This without counting the ever-increasing stream of fugitives. Not one of the soldiers going up or down whom I have questioned has the least idea of where he is off to, if it be farther away than the next village. The men do not worry the natives, and make no complaints: they look resigned. Many of them display rosaries, medallions, scapularies, and one may often see them make the sign of the cross or indulge in prayer while resting or marching. If an officer details some men from a company, they are embraced

affectionately by their comrades before they leave; and it is the same with the cyclists when they go off on some duty. As a general rule the officers are kind to their men; but it is sad to notice that officers are becoming scarce, and that their eyes are fixed on the horizon with a look expressive of boundless anxiety.

Amid all this hubbub the doctor calls. His face is all smiles. "Don't worry yourselves," he says; "we are driving them back. I hope to be able to visit my patients again to-morrow." After sounding my husband he adds: "You can go away on condition that you use a well-closed-in motor-car to take you quickly to Reims. One train a day still runs from there to Paris. So off with you; a nice journey, and good luck! I shan't come again." As he leaves us he repeats: "You understand, a closed car; and if you have made up your minds to go, don't be too late in starting."

As soon as I can spare the time I drive to Attigny in search of a car. By now the intense traffic of the morning has moderated; the road is only slightly blocked by vehicles, and the weather is fine. I see a harvester in the fields quietly reaping some oats, with

shockers behind him quietly tying and upending the sheaves. A kilometre from Attigny I meet many detachments of infantry and cavalry bivouacking to right and left of the roads on the land and in brickfields. At the entrance to the town I find that I have left my pass at home, and the road is blocked by a dray and some harrows! But the sentry—a reader of character, no doubt—after a good look at me raises the shafts of the dray, and I drive through.

The people of Attigny are all in a flutter, standing in groups outside their houses, discussing things and deliberating what to do. I am astonished to see few or no soldiers in the square and streets, and am told that troops are stationed all round the town, which is in their care. A brave man who has won a reputation for his strong optimism comes up to me. He is pale and seems to have aged. I inquire anxiously after his health. "I am unwell," he replies; "this bad news takes all the life out of me. Still, I keep hoping. Oh yes! we shall win right enough."

I have a talk with the man who hires out cars. At first we arrange to depart on the

following morning, without any luggage, just nightgear. The man then changes his mind, under pressure from another client, who no doubt offers better terms, and puts things off till Sunday.

On my return I tell my husband of the result of my journey, and he thinks that Sunday will be too late. "But no doubt we are fated to suffer invasion," he adds.

We now get busy on our preparations for the journey. I visit the deputy mayor to have the needful pass signed and stamped. Then I call Nelly.

"Are you still determined not to leave Roche?"

"I should be glad to leave, but how will my stepfather manage all by himself? There are cows to be milked and the harvest to finish; he wouldn't let me go."

"I tell you again," persists my husband, "that the harvest will not be yours, and that you should think only of saving what you have already. Your stepfather doesn't understand the situation; and it would be a hard job to make him realise it. He should think first of getting your child into a safe place. You've

got horses, a carriage, and a servant; why don't you have yourself driven to Reims, where, as you know, there is a lady who would gladly take you in and keep you with her while you see how things turn out?"

"I will look into it and speak to my stepfather." But she will never dare to come to a decision, so I advise her further: "If you stay and the Germans reach Roche, be careful; throw your house open to them and let them do what they like with it. Have as little to do with them as possible; don't laugh when talking to them; and see that your little girl, Hélène, doesn't try tricks or faces on them."

A few days ago I recommended her to carry on her, in a bodice which she wears day and night, her bank-notes and gold—valuables which, in connivance with her stepfather, she had hidden with her jewels under a paving-stone in the stable.

"As for the jewels, they will be as safe in your cupboard as in the stable; leave the key in the cupboard to prevent the doors being broken open."

Then follows the inevitable round of old treasures in the house. I have a ramble

through the rooms and their contents. All of a sudden a host of objects of which I previously thought nothing become priceless in my eyes; yet I can't even think of taking anything large or heavy away with me. Most of these things are to me precious relics. Rather than they should run the risk of profanation, I am seized with the idea of collecting them and having an *auto-da-fé*; but I can't make up my mind to that—it would break my heart. So with the greatest possible care and with trembling hands I put the things back in place, saying farewell to them with eyes and lips, and becoming more and more sentimental as I look at the humblest of them, because of the events which they call to mind. In the double bottom of a chest I place my plate and some very precious papers. Everything else will stay in its usual place, and the keys will be left in doors and cupboards. Into the one small valise that I may take I cram a few knick-knacks which have a value for me alone: nothing on earth would make me part with *them*.

We collect the books scattered among the rooms and place them in the bookcases, and I

put some on the deep shelf of an old cabinet. It is a pleasure—a sad pleasure, to-day—to run one's fingers over the bindings, peep into the volumes, smell the scent of the ink, and recall, as one takes each in hand, how it was acquired and what impressions were left by its perusal. So we must abandon all these books which were the delight and interest of our life! While I order the piles in the carved case I experience the feeling of protecting vainly the flower-decked grave of a child on a stormy day against the pitiless attacks of the furious elements.

Pierre is tired and goes to bed early. So as not to disturb him, I postpone till to-morrow the putting of clean sheets on the beds and clean covers on the dressing-tables. I shall lay a cloth and napkins on the big table in the dining-room, for French soldiers will certainly precede the German, and the first, our defenders and brothers, have a claim on everything we can provide.

Saturday, August 29.

I don't know whether the guns have been silent at all in the night. I fell asleep to their rumbling, and when I woke up at dawn their

orchestra was playing a crescendo. Ah! what mighty music! In comparison with it how trivial is that of a concert given with the usual instruments! Listen now to this masterpiece of a symphony, whose airy waves make distracting vibrations! The clattering rumble of the batteries on the macadam road, the iron tires of the lorries, the clashing of arms, and the noise of horses' and men's feet are the usual accompaniment and development of the great *leit motif.* One's eyes close, one's ears open wide, one's heart beats wildly; breathing ceases; beads of perspiration form; a thousand visions rise before one. Every now and then there is a terrific explosion—a mine gone up: like a hundred million lightning flashes and thunder-claps let loose together and making the ground rock. It is not terror that affects me now. I am under a spell: an enthusiasm courses through my veins, bred of the fearlessness of wild forbears who loved the fight and sang as they went to death. But this is all over in a flash, and I soon pull myself together and reflect that time presses and that I have no time for giving way to this unwonted ecstasy.

While I am making the last preparations for departure, outside, in the burning heat, I see a confused rushing to and fro of military material, amid which the tragic film of emigration unrolls itself without ceasing: people on foot, waggons and carts piled with heterogeneous articles on which are huddled old men and sick, sheltered by an awning stretched over poles made fast in the four corners of the vehicle. Cows, colts, calves are driven as best may be through the general confusion. The men are gloomy, all of them. Many of them have put on their best clothes, probably thinking that thus they will score off the enemy, and one has the sad and ridiculous spectacle of provincial and countrified women hobbling along on Louis xv. heels, much damaged by walking, suffocating in small corsets and tight-fitting, rumpled, dirty skirts, wearing over their dejected faces hats trimmed with showy plumes, and displaying sunburnt throats through the scallop of their low-cut blouses. Police on foot, horseback, or cycle guide all these poor scared creatures like so much cattle and make them keep moving southwards; for if by any mischance the procession were to

stop, the confusion would become hopeless. Among the fugitives we recognise some people from neighbouring villages. Their faces, but lately so jolly and kindly, now are drawn and pinched. We call to them: "What, is it you? How are things going?" They turn their sad eyes to the sky and stammer words which are lost in the hubbub, while the police signal to them not to stop.

At noon there brushes past the half-closed shutters of the kitchen, in which I am busy, a procession the sight of which quite upsets me. In front walks a tall priest, his face dripping with sweat, leading by the bridle a horse drawing a cart in which are seated, each in an arm-chair, a man and a woman who seem to have reached the extreme limits of age and infirmity. Behind them comes a group of foot-passengers, among whom I recognise quite a number of people from Neuville and Day, villages lying four or five kilometres north of Roche. I go out to them. The curé of Neuville—it is he—explains to neighbours who have come up too that some French batteries have since morning been posted on the Neuville and Voncq heights, so he thought it his duty

to remove his grandparents from among the dangers of the artillery engagement which seemed imminent. He is taking them southward, anywhither. He will not go farther to-day, but spend the night with his old relatives on a friendly farm at Roche. His parishioners, on the other hand, push on, and the human wave, kept to its course by the police, disappears in the distance.

Crowds of folk from Rilly, Semuy, Voncq, and even Attigny are descending the hill and passing by. At Roche they are in a country they know, so they rush pell-mell to the houses and wells. They left their homes hurriedly, in a fit of fear, without taking anything with them, and are weakened by want and the heat. Some Roche harvesters who this morning were still gathering in the wheat are also taking a part in the general confusion, for they are beginning to see that, after all, their labours have been in vain and themselves quite mistaken. They too have to face the question of leaving, and, judging by the present state of the military operations, they will have time to get clear with but very little of their property. They in their turn must tear themselves away

from almost everything that binds them to their country.

Nelly enters like a whirlwind: "Uncle, uncle, have you room for me and Hélène in your car?" This puts us in a very awkward position, for the hirer had undertaken to drive two people, not four. We tell her that, if we can't take her with us, she can at least be driven at once in her carriage by her man to Reims, where we agree on a place to meet her at.

"The fact is," she answers, "that I dare not oppose my stepfather. He makes fun of my fears, scolds me for wanting to go, says that all this nervousness is mere stupidity, and that fugitives are cowards. Then, too, I shouldn't like to rob him of his man and the mare, which he requires for getting in the harvest."

Always the harvest—for the King of Prussia! At this very moment her stepfather comes out of the farmyard, sitting in the seat of a horse rake. He won't get very far with that turn-out. An infantry column entering the village drives him back, and he comes home raging and cursing people who do nothing but prevent others working.

The genuine peasant regards any one who doesn't work on the land as an idler. Yet these soldiers don't look lazy as they tramp along, pale-faced, worn-out, covered with dust and sweat. There is not a single officer with them. Several are so exhausted that they sink down on the bank beside the road, declaring that they can't go a single step farther. Having nothing better, we carry them buckets of cold water, which they drain greedily. The non-coms., thoughtful men, advise them not to drink too much or they will do themselves harm. These are the survivors of a Breton regiment, now being taken ten kilometres behind the fighting line to get a short spell of rest. They may not stop in the village; those who are done up will be collected by the regimental vehicles. Where do they come from? What have they seen? We should greatly like to know, but they say nothing; perhaps they are under orders not to answer questions.

. . . . . .

Five o'clock.—One of our farmers is going to Attigny, so my husband has begged him to see the motor-car man and ask him if we can

definitely rely on him. Since the morning, the extraordinary bustle outside has made Pierre keep on saying: "We shan't be able to go; you see if we shall. We should have started to-day; to-morrow will be too late." I gather from his behaviour that he is hugely interested in events, and that, if he wants to get far away from this, it is merely to see me in a safe place. Similarly, any regrets I feel for being still at Roche are due to fears for him, who is more liable than myself to be molested by the enemy. This mutual anxiety excepted, it must be confessed that the living page now opened for us to read is too intensely interesting for us not to be fiercely absorbed in it.

The cannon's song is an effective lullaby. No longer harassed by the police, the emigrants fling themselves on the ground beside their packages, and make preparations for spending the night there, without thought of eating, so great is the stupor of fatigue. The children, careless and bolder, roam through the village, and we give them what we have—alas, how little it is!—milk, soup, vegetables, fruit, the day's eggs.

Sunset.—A thin, cold mist rises on the meadow.

Dusk draws on. I am upstairs in the work-room, thinking about Nelly, whose preparations for leaving are now complete, when all of a sudden a terrific explosion and a great crash shake the ground. The house seems to rise on its foundations; the windows rattle as if they would break, furniture and linen jump about and get mixed up together. So violent was the shock that I fell on my knees. I fancy the village is being bombarded. From down-stairs my husband shouted to me: "Isabelle, are you there?"

"Yes! Whatever was that noise? Let's be off, let's get away."

I run down, valise in one hand, my wraps in the other, and call to Nelly: "Get yourself and Hélène ready quickly; we must be off at once."

"Why, why, aunt?"

"Didn't you hear it? The fighting has reached us; everything will be blown to bits. But do be quick!"

She stares at me in amazement. In less than two minutes I have my clothes and shoes on. Pierre, who went out for a moment, with me shouting after him, returns and says quite

calmly: "That's Rilly-aux-Oies bridge just gone up. What! you dressed? Are you afraid?"

"I don't want us to be blown to bits," I reply, a little reassured by his words; "and I am keeping myself ready for whatever may happen."

The farmer, on his way back from Attigny, pulls up at our door to tell us that the journey by motor has become impossible, for the hirer and his car have been requisitioned for to-morrow morning. Just what we expected! The farmer goes on to explain that the French army has concentrated in the country between Attigny and Roche; that the Moroccans are encamped on the farther bank of the Aisne, in the Saint Lambert direction; that the valley is black with troops, and the artillery is in position on the heights all round us.

A squadron of cavalry comes from the north and west, and is swallowed up in Roche. The men show dark faces and black eyes under the khaki peaks of their caps, and their sing-song accent tells of their being from the Midi. . . . They don't seem much the worse for privations and fatigue. . . . Their horses are tied up in

the stables, courtyards, farms, even in the street. Most of the fugitives who had taken refuge in these buildings have had to clear out to make room for them.

. . . . . .

After them, some ambulance waggons park themselves in front of our house. The horses and mules are taken out, but not unharnessed; they are given their food where they stand. Two doctor-majors are quartered on us.

This is the eve of the battle. The long-drawn-out thunder of guns pierces the night. The explosion just now has warned me to be on the alert. I have a strong presentiment that the end of all things is at hand. I can picture the devastation of the village, its houses crumbling in the shell-fire and the flames. Pierre asks me: "Are you nervous about yourself? Do you think you could endure the feelings aroused by a battle?" My answer is: "If I had only myself to think of, I should ask but one thing—to see what is coming." He is still weak, so he goes upstairs to bed. The majors, whose kits have been brought in, send me word that they will not take their meals here.

To see what is coming? Yes, I do want to; but I don't go so far as wishing to sacrifice myself, and especially not to sacrifice my husband, and that is why—since we are now condemned to stay here during the fighting—I am going to make sure of a shelter while it lasts. Our house is built on a kind of soft rock, called "glaize" hereabouts, and has cellars above ground, so it does not give good enough protection from shells. I repair to the château, whose cellars meet our requirements, and tell the caretaker that I have permission to go there for refuge should the need arise. While returning, I run against the deputy mayor in the lane leading from our place to the château. This old man has had to meet single-handed the demands of the Southerners, as my husband was prevented from helping him by his illness, and seems angry: "What on earth do they want here? They're always here! That won't help the spring wheat."

I try to make him see how serious the situation is. "Eh! What do you say? that there will be fighting at Roche to-morrow? You want to frighten me." I leave him routed, stuttering with dismay, but still unconvinced.

I have had to await the army doctors' return. Seated under the lamp in the kitchen, I listen to the dragoons' burst of laughter, their deep oaths and the stamping of the horses, all mingled with the booming voice of the cannon. At times comparative silence is restored by the thunderous command of a non-com.; but the hubbub soon begins again. One of the majors comes in at eleven, a small grey-haired man with a thin, tanned face seamed by deep wrinkles. His general expression suggests despair and fever. He apologises for keeping me up and says that his colleague will not be coming. He then asks to see the master of the house. I tell him that my husband is unwell and in bed. That seems to perplex him, and as I think I know what he has in mind, I acquaint him with the miscarriage of our plans for leaving and ask him what risks we shall run. "Who can say?" he replies anxiously. "In war the unforeseen preponderates. It is difficult to foresee what danger civilians would be exposed to were there fighting in the village. At Raucourt, yesterday, I was on duty in a house round which shells fell like rain. Splinters entered through the windows into the hall, and

not a man was touched. There are all kinds of unforeseen and inexplicable risks. As for the Germans' inhumanity, that too is mysterious and doubtful. Alongside of atrocious and well-authenticated acts are others of a very noble and generous character, as the people of Sedan know. I myself was surprised by the enemy on the battlefield while tending the wounded, and looked on myself, my staff, and my wounded as prisoners. I didn't move. Some German officers came up and asked why I was waiting. You may judge my astonishment at not being taken prisoner. 'No, no!' they said. 'Away with you, and rejoin your command as quickly as you can.' I confessed that I had no idea of the whereabouts of the corps to which I was attached, the name of which I told them. The Germans at once supplied me with very full information, and for safety's sake gave me an escort which guided us to a point from which I was able to find my way back to my regiment." Encouraged by this confidence I ask him whether he knows what has happened at Charleville, my native place. "Mézières and Charleville are uninjured. After drawing up a scheme of resistance and having Charleville

evacuated, those in command gave up the idea of defending it, and the Germans occupied it without a fight. At Sedan it was a more bloody business, and some houses were burned. . . . There was very stiff fighting at Raucourt, and some deplorable things happened, but they were a mere bagatelle beside the butchery and carnage that took place in Belgium." At the thought, the major's face contracts and he clenches his hot hand. "It was abominable," he adds heavily, "and no words could describe adequately what actually took place."

I ask him what arms are the most destructive.

"Our '75's'; their effects are terrible. So far I have not had any wounded in struck by explosive bullets, but I know that the Germans have made use of them. . . . Yes; it is quite true that watercourses were heaped full with bodies and that they overflowed with blood. I believe, alas! that our losses are as great as those of the enemy. If the war lasts as it is for three months, they will total a million a side." I am horrified. I ask him when he will be moving on. He says that he doesn't know; his part—to collect the wounded—will begin as soon as another fight is in progress.

He then goes to bed.

Sunday, August 30.

Towards midnight the firing ceased, but the chatter of the cavalrymen and the stampings of horses kept me awake. Before two, there is a great to-do. Orders are given, sabres rattle, horses neigh, men swear and squabble ; then the hail-like noise of horseshoes on the road, and the rumbling of waggons as the drivers urge on their horses and crack their whips. About four, the ground floor of our house, the front door of which we have to leave open, is invaded. I go down to see what it is : stretcher-bearers and drivers come for orders from their chief.

Out of doors it is a most delightful summer dawn—the vast sky slightly tinted with pink, a strong, cold, purifying breeze in which the bedewed greenery sparkles. The birds are in full song, and we humans know from them, even before we open our shutters, whether the day will be a fine one. The first glance at the poplar tops bending in the wind also tells us what sort of weather to expect during the moon. As the dog-days are now over, I

prophesy ten days of fine, hot and stormless weather.

The major just salutes me as he leaves the house; he hasn't touched the coffee made for him. But as the ambulances and waggons move off he steps indoors again to advise me to leave Roche. "I really think that would be the best thing to do," he insists. I go with him to the door, and now observe that the swallows have gathered on the roofs and are twittering as they do just before migration, while their file-leaders fly overhead in large circles and utter shrill cries. Now, we have not yet reached the usual date of their flight: are they too planning to get away from the fighting?

After the departure of the troops the square and village streets all look repulsively filthy. With horse-dung and remains of forage and straw are mixed all sorts of rubbish—bits of tainted meat, empty or partly-empty tins of preserves, bread, puttees, and particularly bottles. This is the first time that the soldiers passing through have left such evil-smelling traces behind them.

At the farm to which I go daily for the milk

I find everybody in a flutter. The curé from Neuville lodged there with his old people and several of his flock, and during the night, under cover, no doubt, of the general hubbub, his cart has been stolen—a cart which had been put in his charge, he exclaims despairingly. He has just been all round the village vainly looking for another vehicle, but no one is able or willing to lend him such a one as would take the arm-chairs of the two paralysed old people. These spent the night in their seats, motionless, and apparently taking no heed of events. The farmeress, the good, brave wife of a man with the colours, is greatly distressed. Her sister, the girl with the mystical eyes, keeps insisting: "I mean to go. If you won't come with me I shall take the two little girls and we shall go, I don't care where; but I won't fall into the hands of the Prussians. . . . Your farm and beasts! What are they compared with our threatened life and honour? . . . If you won't let us have a horse and cart we shall go on foot. God and His angels will help us."

On returning home I find Nelly there, just going to urge it on her uncle that we should make for Reims with her and her little daughter,

in our phaeton, which their mare Rosette can pull. There are a few stray soldiers in the street, and some police are hunting farms and stables and compelling loitering emigrants to move on.

The poor people of the village are talking things over on their doorsteps. Shall they go? No well-to-do folk are to be seen; they are doubtless debating the same question indoors. Suddenly the great guns, as though rejoicing in their terrible voices, make such an uproar that they might be just behind our houses. The women holding counsel in the street scream and scatter, hugging their breasts. But this is merely a prelude, the early morning song of the awakening guns. A salvo, and then silence. Pierre and I look questioningly at one another. Shall we be off with Nelly? I ask myself whether I feel afraid. My heart certainly is beating fast and I feel quite pale, but a deep music sings in my head. Something decisive is coming, and it is only right that I should witness it. "Yes! I should be glad to see what happens." My husband smiles. "Yes, to see the facts which the serious mortal will be allowed to see, as your brother Arthur says.

So should I, but . . ." Boom! Boom! Boom! The instinct to seek shelter makes us bend our backs and legs. From the opposite direction come other sharp, imperious, detonations in reply to the first — a dialogue heralding the end of the world. Can the trumpet of the Last Judgment have sounded? It is sounding surely for the men who are falling over yonder.

A messenger, sent by a roadman to his wife, reaches Roche with a letter ordering her to leave at once. The news passes round quickly, putting an end to many indecisions. We make feverish preparations for departure. Nelly runs in panting to ask for the coach-house key: she wants to be off at once, and is quite ready. My husband goes with our niece to the stable, and I follow. In the courtyard I discover timid, irresolute Nelly in the act of removing the cover from the carriage and taking down the harness, while she shouts to her man to fetch the mare. For the first time in her life she has made a resolution without help; fear has compelled her to act with unexpected decision. I can see that nothing will keep her in Roche now.

The firing becomes more furious; the air is filled with a penetrating, acrid, dusty smell. The crackling of machine-guns and rifles mingles with the roar of the guns. Nobody in the village can say exactly where the fighting is, but the soldiers are drawn up for battle quite near us. As far as the eye can see are motionless troops, while batteries seem to be retiring this way along the roads and through the fields.

Our niece's man-servant refuses to drive his mistress, and means to stay on the farm with her stepfather. That makes us think. Can we allow this young woman to start alone with her little girl? Into what predicaments may not her lack of experience take her? Our decision to stay is shaken.

The rumbling of cars and the sound of horses on the road draw our attention—military ambulances and requisitioned vehicles with wounded, coming from the Attigny direction. Owing to the heat, they are open or uncovered. They are driven at top speed, one behind the other, the motors overtaking the other vehicles. What a sight! Blood everywhere! Cadaverous faces; arms and bodies bound in linen with

bright red spots on it. Motionless forms at length on the stretchers, mattresses, or straw, resigning themselves to the jolting. A couple of hours ago these inert forms were vigorous young men, and now, look at them; death is written on their faces and the death-rattle sounds in their throats as they lie in unspeakable torment. Some of them utter groans; and from some of the vehicles blood trickles and makes trails in the road. The pain of it strangles me. "Come," sighs Pierre, "the major was right this morning, we must get away."

While I go upstairs to get my cherished trinkets, my husband stays below and has a last look round the big drawing-room. I linger upstairs, saddened by having to abandon all the things about me, and through the window, from which the curtains are drawn back, I watch the exodus of the villagers. Nelly has pulled up the phaeton at the door; the mare, separated from her colt, is restive and whinnies madly. Opposite us, our neighbour's brake also has been put to, and parcels and clothes are being thrown into it. At the lower end of the village, carts are getting under

way. The farmeress who used to sell me milk is seated with her sister, two little girls and some other people on the top of a mountain of bedding, baskets, sacks of grain and trusses of hay, all piled on a big waggon drawn by six horses. The farmer's young son is doing his best to keep his team to one side of the road, and the farm-servants are endeavouring to make some unwilling colts and cows follow them. From courtyards, stables, and meadows rises the bellowing of loosed and abandoned cattle. The smaller creatures of the backyard —fowls, rabbits, pigs, calves—are rushing in all directions; they too are panic-stricken. Here up the lane comes the château omnibus, containing the caretaker, his wife, the nurse, and the sporting dog. I cannot tear myself away from the sight, and make up my mind to go downstairs, riveted as I am by the Lares of my father's house. A great weariness forces me down into a seat, when I am recalled to realities by the impatient voice of my husband. I go down. He has just taken a photograph from its frame and holds it out to me. As I have no time to open the valise, I slip it into my gown to carry it next my heart—this por-

trait of my brother Arthur, taken on the day of his first communion.

Just as we are getting into the carriage, Nelly's stepfather comes up to say good-bye and take the keys. He is still determined to stay, come what may. He will look after the house as carefully as if it were his own—even more carefully; he isn't afraid of anything. We advise him to keep close to a bank or to the side of a ditch as long as the battle lasts. Yet as he embraces his stepdaughter, crying bitterly, he expresses the fear that he won't see her again—though protesting that he belongs to Roche and will remain there, even if he must be killed.[1]

We start.

The convoy of wounded has crossed the Loire bridge and has chosen a different route from ours. It follows the Vouziers road, taking a short cut along a side road, while we head for Chuffilly and so pass through Méry. The same hubbub, the same dismay, even the same traces of the billeting of troops prevail in

[1] Two days later, when the infantry defending the passage of the Aisne were still fighting behind the farm, and shells were falling around him, he fled without even stopping to put on his jacket.

these villages. Here and there in the roadway lie fly-covered carcasses. At Chuffilly all the big farmers have left, headed by the mayor; and the fugitives from villages farther north, stranded there yesterday evening, seem to lack the courage to push on. Nothing could be sadder or more distressing than the encampments of these fugitives, broken by fatigue and sorrow. Though freed from the fears which made them flee, they cannot resign themselves to the tragic exile into which they are being swept. Some of them, elderly men and boys, have cycles, and cannot resist the longing to return for a look at the places they have left. They won't get far, as they will be refused passage through the lines.

We unexpectedly come upon the château omnibus and follow it for a time, although Rosette, fresher and cleverer than the big carriage horse, will persist in wanting to pass it. It is not at all an easy matter to keep moving through all this military turmoil, and we have to show our passes more than once. Such notice as the army takes of us is merely to regulate our flight to suit the movements of its columns, to make us keep now to the right,

now to the left, or halt us to permit its own progress.

As we approach Coulommes a splendid and awe-inspiring sight meets our eyes. The country is quite covered by bodies of infantry, standing at ease, and dragoons, cuirassiers, and chasseurs in the saddle. The red and blue uniforms show brightly in the sun, and the arms glitter. At the entrance to the village, in a close which we pass along, are some Algerians facing east, stretching themselves with catlike movements and raising their arms to heaven. Under the white of their burnouses the orange, blue, red and yellow of their uniform produce a crude clashing of colours. The ivory whiteness of their teeth when they smile, contrasting with the bronze of the faces seen under their turbans, is equally striking. No doubt the hour of fighting has not yet struck for them, as their arms are piled and their little Arab steeds are hobbled at the end of the enclosure. It is somewhere away on the horizon to our right, nearly behind us, that the army, almost pathetically motionless, faces the enemy. The officers, all mounted, are focusing their binoculars on the same point. As we are under

the carriage hood we cannot see anything of the fighting. For the time being, one has quite enough to do to watch the emigrants, those on foot as well as those driving, who seem to be crawling between the files of armed men. I begin to be afraid, as I feel myself getting drawn more and more into the battle, and fancy that the first movement of retreat will bring us within range of the engines whose terrible voice thunders in our ears. What a fine thing to leave Roche merely to throw ourselves into the monster's maw! At Roche we should at least have been struck down in our own home, among things we loved; while here on the road . . .! I quake and commend to God my own soul and those of my companions. Nelly, who utters a childish remark, is told to make her confession, for we are, I tell her, in peril of death. . . . A tall, bare-headed, apoplectic-looking man throws himself at the mare's head—the Coulommes schoolmaster, who has just recognised us.

"Ah!" he cries in a terror-stricken voice; "every one has gone, leaving only me to look after the commune. If only my wife and seven children were in safety! Yet we ought

to be off. The military telephone is installed in the school, and if the Germans find it presently . . ." My husband, deeply moved, sympathetically reminds him that our two-seater already carries four people.

After leaving the village—has it taken us an hour, a year, or an era to go through it?—we encounter once more the moving sight of the stationary army, awaiting its orders. Some police order us curtly to pull up near one of the roadside ditches. The sun is scorching: one literally boils under the leather hood of the phaeton. Dust and smells suffocate us, flies torture Rosette, whose restiveness my husband can hardly control—and this senseless firing on the top of it all! Commands are heard and a general retreating movement follows; so here we are, caught in its eddies. Round us prances the cavalry, frightening the emigrants' horses, and we fear we shall be upset into the ditch. The gendarmes have got us into a very nasty position. The soldiers storm at us civilian interlopers, and we make ourselves very small. However, our passage through the lines is arranged, and the wave bearing the jetsam of the great shipwreck advances along the narrow

corridor left it by the army. I catch sight again of the long silhouette of the Neuville curé walking beside the lorry on to which his old folk had been hoisted in their arm-chairs. At last our turn comes, and we bring up the rear of the procession, progressing for a long time at a walk between ranks of soldiers, who close in behind us. I experience the feeling of gliding very slowly out of an accursed place, from the entrance to hell, when—oh, happy deliverance!—a hussar officer rides up and very kindly and considerately asks us to trot.

Most of the emigrants turn off right and left, into cross-roads, some to make for Pauvres, others for Sommepy. We go straight ahead, in rear of the château omnibus, towards the farmhouse-inn at Mazagran, where six roads meet. A civilian cyclist comes up and tells the château coachman that we are going in the wrong direction. The omnibus turns half round, but my husband, quite unnerved, means to follow the route laid down by him from the map in the Ardennes postal almanac, and his sense of locality does not prove at fault.

We reach Mazagran. The farmer-inn-keepers have fled. The windows are smashed,

the doors open, the fences levelled, the pumps broken. Uhlans must have been there last night to reconnoitre to this point which, being at a road junction, has great strategical value. Remnants of French infantry regiments are there now, and among them we recognise some of the soldiers who went through Roche yesterday. There are also many emigrants sitting in the shadow of the trees. No means here of getting even a glass of water! My husband goes to the triple cross-roads to pick out the way we must follow, and so we start off again.

We are now a long way from the Aisne. The noise of battle gets less, and my anxiety diminishes. It is now noon. The villages in this plain of Champagne are very few and far between. Suddenly, terror seizes me again. In front of us, to the left of a perfectly white village built on a chalky soil on which still stand, half knocked over, some shocks of wheat, I have just caught sight of an artillery park with its guns pointed right at us. I fancy that they are really aimed and ready to vomit their shells. My husband stills my fears: "We are quite a long way from the battlefield," he remarks. "This artillery is resting."

Leffincourt. At the first farm of any size we ask permission to unharness Rosette and give her something to eat. The farm people are quite agreeable, and place at our disposal whatever has been left after the clearing of their premises by the restless artillerymen from the South. As for refreshments, the passage of the troops, and especially of those of to-day, have completely cleared out larders and cellars, and the inhabitants have to live on the soldiers' supplies. As we are too late for the soup, we mustn't expect to get anything. While we nibble some chocolate tablets which we brought with us, the master of the house explains that from to-morrow onwards each farmer of the neighbourhood will give up one head of cattle to meet the population's needs. We ask ourselves whether there will be any to-morrow for Leffincourt.

In the farm kitchen, with its litter of dirty pots and pans and horrible smell of cabbage, there is a continuous movement of artillerymen —obstructive, untidy, saucy, chattering, jovial fellows. They were lately brought up from Toulouse and Montauban into Belgium, from which they are now returning. . . . Some

quartermasters ask us in their picturesque language to take coffee with them. When Nelly comes in with her child her appearance is greeted in gallant manner by the Southerners, who, not the least chilled by the northern reserve of our niece, strike up some songs of Languedoc, to entertain her, no doubt. . . . We withdraw. . . . Other talkative and obliging Gascons take possession of Rosette, give her a feed of bran and oats, wash her, rub her down, curry-comb her, and milk her. The good creature seems quite pleased with it all. Some of these kindly ostlers wear the broad scapularies with the design of the Sacred Heart sewn on the left side of their shirts or tunics.

Now there pass in the street long convoys of country vehicles of all sorts, drawn by small horses or mules in weird harness with collars covered with bells and surmounted by a long horn. The drivers sing at the top of their voices and urge on their teams with clickings of the tongue and the crackings of whips. We have seated ourselves outside on a worn bench to watch them go by. An artilleryman comes to anchor near us and talks of his country, the

finest on earth, immeasurably more beautiful than these northern districts—of the South, where all is plenty and joy.

. . . . . .

But it is time for us to move on. Twenty willing hands have harnessed Rosette and put her to, and are stretched out for a tip. Our departure is accompanied by thanks, compliments and good wishes.

After threading our way through Leffincourt, amid the confusion of soldiers and convoys, we drive easily along a fine level road. The mare trots bravely, head well up. There are fewer emigrants now, and we overtake them all. The roar of the guns becomes fainter and fainter.

Machault. The troops quartered in this town do not block the roads entirely. Beyond Machault we see in front of us the outline of a turn-out which is familiar, on the Cauroy road. Rosette neighs furiously and quickens her pace. As we come up, we recognise a Roche farmer and his family with their waggon, cart, char-à-bancs and light trap. We know that these folk have left Roche with the one object of protecting from any chance of violence the two

daughters of the house, one twenty-two years old, the other nineteen. As these young people refused to leave their parents, they have moved off in a body, leaving a very large farm in the care of two little servants, charity children, whose tricks cause them some anxiety. This family is making for a relative's house at Pont-Faverger, a town on the Suippes, twenty-five kilometres the other side of Reims.

Rosette catches up the caravan horses, and there we are all in a body. The farmer, of Reims extraction and a *bourgeois*, comes up for a chat. He does not see the war from the same angle as the genuine peasant. As he walks beside us he tells us that he offered his horses and horned cattle to the commissariat, but never got an answer. He left last night hurriedly for sentimental reasons, but regrets he did not arrange to get away a few days sooner. What we see loaded in his vehicles is not the twentieth part of what he could have salved had he been warned of the enemy's approach ; and if he had departed earlier he would perhaps have induced the other farmers of the district to follow his example. He is heart-broken to think that everything left on the farm will not

merely be lost to France but go to feed the Germans.

Hauviné. Bétheniville. Evening comes on, a fine, cool, beautifully fine evening. The chirping of crickets and the croaking of frogs drown the now distant guns. Actually, it is a fine evening; but a bad one, after so hot a day, for a convalescent with a delicate chest, almost starved and yet obliged to keep moving on—for in the townlets just passed through we have not been able to find anything in the way of refreshments or lodgings, as the troops are in possession everywhere and have taken everything there was. So we push ahead in the rash hope of being made welcome by the relative of our road companions.

Night falls as we reach Pont-Faverger. After passing a level crossing, whence we can see the main street of the town, we catch sight of a large number of horse artillerymen, with their caissons, bearing down on the pretty little bridge over the swift-flowing, clear stream, which we must cross. There seems to be a prospect of trouble. The farmer gives up the idea of entering the place with his carts, and is going to draw up his caravan in a plantation

along a wide dry ditch which might belong to a fortification. One of his daughters goes up into the village, while we others draw back a little to wait until the bridge is somewhat less crowded. Just as we have made up our minds to have a try for it, the girl who had gone ahead to reconnoitre returns with the news that her aunt left only this morning with her children and some friends. The inns are crowded and we shall never manage to find a lodging. The farmer's wife, who has just met the motor-car hirer of Attigny, comes up in turn and tells us that Attigny is in the hands of the Germans, that pillage is general there, and that the villages round are in flames. Then, pointing at the groups encamped with their carts and animals on the scanty and withered grass of the glacis and among the trees on the rampart, she concludes sorrowfully: "That's how we shall have to spend the night." The plain all round is one huge emigrant camp, among which one can see some military waggons. The children are asleep already, while their parents keep a brooding watch over them.

It would be fatal to my husband to spend the night out of doors. Whatever it costs I must

find him a shelter. I leave the carriage and go off in search of one. The whole place, including the railway station, is packed with soldiers and refugees. Not a house, not a stable, not a farm building, not a shed, not a shelter, not even a corner in a wall is unoccupied. All along the streets the army horses are tied short to pickets, close to the caissons, saddle touching saddle, and so packed that they could not possibly kick one another.

The air is so laden with exhalations and dust as to be almost unbreathable. I see playing on the pavement by an inn door one of my niece Emilie's little boys. She comes out of the inn just as I am going in to ask if there is any accommodation to be had. There is none. Emilie tells me she has been here an hour with her stepfather and children. I leave her to continue my search. I go from door to door, begging, demanding a bed for just one sick person, no matter what the price may be. I am passed on from one house to another. I run panting through the darkness; I can find no place; I become desperate. Two officers, seeing my distress, take pity on me and accompany me to the mayor's house, the

château, where they are billeted. The master has left only this moment. They tell me of his deputy, and I at once go off to look for him. I explain our situation to him. He ponders, and in view of our modest requirements briefly directs me to a low-class inn at the end of a steep and stony lane. The innkeeper, to whom I present the deputy's recommendation, agrees to let us bring our carriage into his yard and to bait the mare. But it is out of the question to give us bed or supper; his rooms are all taken and, as for provisions, he has not got a mouthful of bread nor a glass of wine left. I beg him to let me have a little coffee or some boiling water, to which I will myself add the materials for brew. But he refuses, as the curfew has rung and orders are very strict, owing to the munition trains being parked in the neighbourhood. Almost in tears, I beg to be given a bed, saying that I will pay anything he likes, explaining that it is for an invalid and a small child. The innkeeper's wife now comes to my help and, pointing to her under-cook, who, with a big baby asleep in her arms, is getting ready to go home, says: "This woman is going to give you a room."

Our carriage safe in the inn courtyard, and Rosette put in the innkeeper's care, we follow the under-cook through the dark and echoing lanes, stepping softly. After curfew, it appears, one may not walk or even talk in the streets. In the darkness by the houses one stumbles over warm objects—people sleeping or squatting down in silence. Only the horses answer one another in all directions, striving by furious stampings to enlarge the space allotted to each.

In the under-cook's humble abode another big boy is in bed and asleep. Her husband has gone to the war. I ask her to be allowed to heat up a warm drink. Our hostess protests that she has run out of methylated spirits for her lamp and may not relight her stove. But she still has the remains of a bottle of wine, and this she offers us. Then we are taken to our room, with its one bed. We lay the mattress and one of the sheets on the floor for Nelly and her child, and I and my husband stretch ourselves on the lumpy under-mattress. Beneath our window the horses keep kicking fiercely against one of the farm doors, making a noise which might be that of cannon. Now

and then an angry voice imposes silence on the animals, which get a few strokes of a stick into the bargain. The kicking stops for a minute and then begins again. Far away on the cobble-stones of the high road we can hear the sounds of an approaching flood of infantry. One can picture this long-drawn-out, vast, unnumbered army which keeps on passing through in silent retreat.

I cannot sleep on my wretched bed in the noisy darkness of the room, and this makes me review the happenings of the day. The flight through the battle area has its complement of distress and terror in this little town, so prosperous yesterday, destined to destruction to-morrow. This human ocean, these armies whose waves drive us before them, these humbled populations caught in the eddies of war, and fleeing from the fate reserved for the vanquished, are the exact repetition of the old-time migrations, the horror and terror of which may still be read of in our books. Then rise before my eyes the sights which have a more personal interest, called up by recollection of the words said to us just now by our travelling companion's wife: Attigny

captured, villages round in flames (Roche is four kilometres from Attigny), our dear old house destroyed, and the inhabitants who have stayed seized, martyred, shot! I can at least imagine the pillage and sacrilege; the destruction of the precious souvenirs of which we had taken the most loving care. My mind turns to those dead and gone. "You can see," I say to them, "that we could not do more than we have done. Neither you nor we could foresee what is happening to-day—that an unprecedented disaster would come and destroy the legacy of tenderness and glory left us by you." After all, would it not be a comfort to know that these relics had been consumed by the purifying flames, and so escaped profanation by vile hands? I then feel myself lifted on to a plane other than that of ordinary life, the plane of a new, almost immaterial, existence, in which have no part the wretched little calculations so closely interwoven with what we call our normal being. The futility of yesterday's strugglings is disclosed to me, and I view it with amazement, now that I feel an inner renewal of heart, soul and mind.

From the mattress on the floor comes the

even, uninterrupted breathing of sleeping Nelly. Little Hélène talks and moans in her sleep, and her light body suddenly rolls off on to the boards. I lift her up and, without waking her, put her gently back on the bed, which I tuck in as best I can.

Monday, August 31.

The dense fog envelops with a chilly shroud the soldiers stretched or huddled on the street pavements. Some troops are coming in, others marching off to the dull menace of the now reawakening guns.

My hostess was up with the dawn. Taking advantage of her children being asleep, she is getting together some clothes, so that she too may flee. I borrow a can from her and go off in search of a little milk. The Pont-Faverger streets through which I pass are steep and shockingly paved; the high walls of the white-washed houses look blind, as it were, and their lack of windows, added to the crookedness of the streets, make the old burg suggestive of an Eastern town or a fortress.

After a scanty meal we start for the inn. The innkeeper tells us that our travelling companions of yesterday came in to say that they

had decided to work away to the left, towards Sommepy. I can see these good people, chilled by the fog after a night in the open, taking the road again as soon as permitted by daylight and military regulations, and now travelling at random. We, after paying royally for the night's hospitality, set off for Reims, just as the sun breaks through the mist.

We are scarcely started when we notice that the mare, usually so tractive, is restive and unwilling, and neighs in a peculiar way and keeps turning her head right and left. Her hollow flanks and greedy looks towards the fields of sainfoin show us that the innkeeper, in spite of all he said, has given her nothing to eat. So we are anxious to get quickly to a village where our animal can have a proper feed.

At Epoye we can find nothing ; the army has raided all there was. So we go on and reach the foot of a long hill, on the crest of which is Berru. To ease Rosette, Pierre and I leave the carriage and climb the hill on foot. The fine warm air and his nervous tension seem to give my husband strength. There are few refugees to be seen this morning.

Military motor-cars overtake and meet us at a giddy speed.

Berru, on the hill of the same name, is a very ancient borough lying inside the girdle of Reims forts, eight kilometres from that town, of whose proximity we get evidence in other ways. Here there are no troops retreating from battles in Belgium and the Ardennes. Here one does not breathe desolation, but rather a kind of bustling cheerfulness. The territorials we meet look bright; their appearance is restful, and so they contrast strongly with the combatants whose disordered lines we have just come through. Among them we recognise some faces from Attigny and round about—faces reflecting a cheerfulness and well-being which may well be due to the delicious wine of the district. They are good fathers of families, solid folk, who left their homes with swelling hearts and tears in their eyes, but have found in the routine of the entrenched camp at Reims—also in the repeated visits of their wives—an alleviation of their sorrow. You might think them to be here on a holiday—one which they certainly would willingly have gone without, but out of which they must get all the

good they can, since they have to take it. They know nothing of the war except what they have read in the papers. Not one of them has any idea of what is happening thirty or forty kilometres away. Their duties consist of going quietly now and then, armed with spades, kept none too bright, to make-believe fortification works. Sometimes, armed with the said spades in place of rifles, they mount guard over no less make-believe posts in the barricades. They don't seem much surprised to see us, as they knew us to be from Paris; but when we tell them that all the villages of the Attigny canton have been depopulated since yesterday, they can hardly believe us. Though they constitute a portion of the garrison of the forts, most of them are billeted on private people, and that is the reason why at Berru too we cannot find anything to eat. No innkeeper will bait our mare; but a farmer takes pity on us, lets us have a truss of sainfoin, and opens his coach-house, into which we drive.

He comes for a chat with us and shows surprise at the news we bring. So far, few refugees have climbed the Berru hill, and their stories are so rambling and agitated that they

are not able to bring conviction. He obviously thinks that we are exaggerating things. According to him, the disasters of war could never reach to this district. The French army will have time to repulse the enemy before Reims can be invested ; besides, Reims is so well protected by its forts and garrison that it would put up a successful resistance. However, one fact upsets the good man's optimism : the military authorities have recently notified him and his fellow-citizens to draw up an inventory of everything they possess in the village and in the fields ; also, men have been sent by the higher command to check the cellars which are at a great depth below the ground and in case of bombardment would provide an absolutely safe shelter.

We start off again at about one o'clock. Just outside Berru the view embraces a huge panorama of woods, cultivated lands and vineyards, scattered over with smiling villages. The hill becomes steep ; now we are among woods, and tall trees interlace their branches above us, making a dome of coolness overhead. We pass through Berru and Cernay forests, in which the Reims folk spend their Sundays in

summer-time. To-day these splendid glades, which have witnessed so many merry picnics, harbour a multitude of refugee families who have gone round the hill. This halting-place is a moving sight, with its panic and despair. Ah! the forest re-echoes no longer with the laughter and play of former days! From its depths come sounds of misery and fear, the sobbings of children, and curses. The poor wretches have with them droves of cows and sheep, which, watched by small boys, bellow and bleat in reply to the nervous neighing of horses. Small heaps of ashes and embers on the fouled earth, broken branches, and an indescribable look of devastation speak of the bivouacs of former nights and foretell those of nights to come. No ties of fellowship seem to bind these groups together. They are, as it were, tribes come each from a different locality, each bringing with it its own peculiar load of misery. There is no intercourse between tribe and tribe: each has enough to do in looking after its own people. Their sufferings on the road, the tragedies they have lived through or feared, have deprived these unfortunates of all taste for neighbourliness. The selfish instinct

of self-preservation is their only stimulus and guide. The rich, who have carriages, never offer a lift to the poor who go on foot; and the latter don't think of asking for one. They hardly worry themselves about the excessive weight of their bundles, though they dream of throwing them away or lightening them.

When we emerge from the forest Reims comes into sight, though as yet its outlines are vague—a collection of grey, bluish, and white splotches, dominated by the Cathedral towers, now shining as if the sun had concentrated its rays upon it, as if they had monopolised all the light. From where we are, eye and mind are drawn imperiously to them. They become a splendid obsession. As we approach I believe I can see them and hear them vibrating like a huge horseshoe magnet or tuning-fork!

Beyond Cernay the country changes. All along the road are more sights of misery, more disorder, more devastated fields, more broken roads, more carcasses lying about. The road-men have picked up the loose stones, scraped off the dust and filth, and piled it in geometric heaps in the gutter; zealous country police have rounded up behind the bushes the refugees, the

never-ending refugees, whom one guesses to be near, screened by stacks and fences, no doubt, so that the sight of them may not cause anxiety or give offence to the people of Reims on their strolls. But all for nothing, since the first thing we see on entering Reims is a crowd of refugees encamped on an open space badly hidden by some remains of walls. And all through the suburb of Cernay, as in the heart of the city, you will see in the passages and courtyards the worn faces of countrymen, the close-cropped hair of the children of the North, the bent figures of old labourers.

We must cross Reims to reach the house, in the Chaussée du Port, of the friend to whom we propose to entrust Nelly and her child. It so happens that this lady is on her doorstep as we arrive. She welcomes us with surprise, and when I at once ask about the train to Paris, informs us that for an hour past all communication with the capital has ceased. The suburban train which makes a detour to Epernay may still be running, or perhaps the Paris line is still open, but . . . At this moment a "tortillard" passes along the canal bank under our very eyes, slowly hauling

carriages chokefull of soldiers and refugees all piled in anyhow with bundles and equipment, packed so close that, to take up less room, some dangle their legs outside the freight cars. I glance at my husband and feel relieved when his look answers No! to my unuttered question. Our friend, Madame X., noticing how worn out Pierre seems, offers us hospitality. She owns a stable and coach-house which will accommodate our turn-out.

Our hostess moves in good society in Reims. She is even in a position, thanks to her relations, to get official information, and perhaps that is why she is ignorant of the real facts of the war. Moreover, her frank, gay, truthful character inclines her to absolute optimism. So she refuses credence to our tales, and remains convinced that the French army's retreat is voluntary—purely strategic—and that the Germans will be beaten before they can reach Reims. She knows, on the authority of the municipal councillors, that the town is impregnable; that measures to ensure its safety have been taken. People under orders to leave have been evacuated; an eye is being kept on spies; the German governesses

have been sent to concentration camps; and only the Swiss have been retained out of all those who speak German. High society has organised itself and is devoting itself to national work; hospitals have been established by private initiative. It is a good sign that no wounded have yet reached these hospitals; but the Red Cross ladies say disgustedly that the nurses' uniform is becoming far too common.

. . . . . .

The *sous-préfet* himself is in readiness to leave. Pierre vainly points out that the imminent departure of this man is a confirmation of the news—no mere tittle-tattle—which we bring. . . . Nothing can shake our hostess's serenity. Upon my word, one might think that she takes the refugees with which Reims swarms for adventurers risking a pleasure journey, and ourselves for madcaps on a freakish tour.

Tuesday, September 1.

Weariness has got the better of last night's phantoms: sleep in a comfortable bed has driven away the shipwrecked feeling into which insomnia had plunged me. This house is a

haven; its hospitality is bounteous and comforting. Among other good things, it contains the literary treasures collected by that enthusiastic book-lover, the late M. X. What a pity that circumstances and my present state of mind do not allow me to enjoy the reading and examination of these books which the kindness of our friend has given us liberty to explore!

Early this morning Nelly was off to see her husband at Neufchâtel barracks. I join our hostess downstairs. "Just imagine," she says, "my daughter and her husband are leaving Reims and have tried to take me with them. Only this morning my son-in-law, who at his own request was mobilised in the sanitary corps, has received order to reports at Troyes. My daughter will follow him. From Troyes she will probably rejoin her children, now established in their seaside house. Wouldn't she be glad if I would go with her! But no, I don't leave my house, as I am in no danger. I shall remain under the protection of my good Saint Remy and of our blessed Jeanne D'Arc, and nothing unpleasant will happen to me. And as you will see, those horrible Germans

will never take Reims." As Pierre remains unconvinced, and explains that the enemy might easily be here in three days, she exclaims: "In three days? But we have our generals, our army, our brave allies. Believe me, the Russians will be at Berlin before the Prussians are at Reims. Our 'steam-roller' is advancing, and nothing will be able to withstand it. Also, English reinforcements are coming up by forced marches. As for the fury of the cannon: all the better, as it shows we are defending ourselves and exterminating this accursed brood! You think it seems nearer than yesterday? No, it is because we are using heavier guns." We discuss the question of going *via* Epernay. With kindly good sense she dissuades us. "Observe," she says, "that the train takes people away but brings nobody back. If communications are cut when you reach Epernay, what will become of you in a town where you don't know a soul, and where you won't even find a lodging? So stay here quietly with me for a few days. Our brave soldiers are going to give the enemy a nasty knock, and the railway to Paris will be opened again."

Nelly returns: she has seen her husband. He is expecting to go at any moment, and has sent back to her several articles of clothing with the message that with them to carry he would be much too heavily laden to march and fight in this heat. . . . Under pretence of having some purchases to make, I slip out. Happy thought! I am burning to have a look at the Cathedral. I go slowly up Rue Libergier, and there in front of me rises the marvel. Yet, just as the approach of a person of royal rank frightens one to the point of wishing to withdraw just when one is shown into his presence, so this morning I do not dare to enter Notre-Dame, but content myself with admiring its exterior.

Pierre, who had been out on his own account, returns soon after me. He wanted to shake hands with Emile Lacourt; and after a short private interview saw him depart with his battalion for Fresnes Fort, knapsack on back, looking very gloomy.[1]

The Chaussée du Port, along which runs the suburban train, is a wide street planted with

[1] He was killed by the Germans on October 6, 1914, at Bouchot Wood (Meuse).

trees, bordering the dock of the Aisne-Marne canal, in which many sailing-boats are lying idle. There are some stores of wood and other building material on the quay, out in the open, and under sheds. On the farther side of the canal, and separated from it by a poplar-planted dyke, runs the Vesle; and beyond the Vesle are the Faubourg St. Anne and the Paris road. The property on which we have found refuge therefore faces south. It stands on the edge of the embankment, with only an iron fence between, and consists of a living house, some offices, stable, sheds and a huge woodyard. Between the outer gate and the house door is a small pleasure garden. The household staff is made up of the maid, the gardener and the drayman. The last, named Father Jude, has little driving to do now that business has stopped, and his duties are limited to looking after the horse that has escaped being requisitioned, now joined by our Rosette. While passing us this evening to take orders from his mistress he told us that he is expecting his family from Pont-Faverger, which is threatened by the invasion.

The Paris papers have not come to-day, and

the milkwoman too failed us at noon. So Rosette's milk will have to replace the cow's milk of the dairywoman.

Wednesday, September 2.

I go to the Cathedral very early and there at last find things as I would wish them to be. In the sunlit nave and chapels of the chancel and apse are many worshippers, men and women of good will. Masses are being celebrated at all the altars. The priests officiate, haloed in self-denial; and their assistants pray without turning their heads, lost in themselves. The bread of strength is received with the fervour of the early Christians in the Catacombs. In the confessionals canons and vicars exhort the penitent to make their last preparation, in the face of possible martyrdom and death. Neither lies nor soothing delusions are lavished here. The Cathedral resumes to-day the sublime purpose for which it was built—to release souls from the ties of earth and raise them to the skies. Venerable, and yet magnificent as in its early youth, it finds itself once again the true house of God, the true Gate of Heaven, "the holy, lovely

place, all parts whereof are perfect and in harmony with one another." In very truth, one leaves the Cathedral wonderfully strengthened and lifted up.

Outside, I cannot restrain myself from walking round the great church, since it has always been a very feast of harmony to my spiritual sense. The animals on the apse standing far above in the blue heavens seem like watchers in stone listening to the cannon, and regarding from afar some awful sight.

On reaching the house I encounter an unusual bustle. Some poor women are there begging a little pecuniary help which will enable them to get away. The servant, returning from market, announces that the provision stocks have not come in this morning; butchers have no meat, and the bakeries are kept shut except at certain hours. To get any bread one must stand in a queue. A gentleman appears and asks our hostess to be so good as to lend him a cart and horse, so that he may place his girls in safety. He has hunted the town in vain for some lighter means of transport; but everything has been snapped up by civilians leaving Reims, or requisitioned

by the retreating army. He informs us that the Germans are approaching Compiègne, and that Paris is threatened. Madame X. sends the pessimist about his business.

We now realise the impossibility of getting to Paris, and, as we have noticed that the house has but a limited supply of straw and fodder, we decide to offer at once our mare to the military requisitioning authorities. Madame X. informs us that they have an office at the Town Hall.

After dinner I take Nelly with me to the office. The town wears a strange look. I am astonished by the number of men of military age to be seen walking about in the streets. In all directions are animated groups discussing the lack of news; and disputes arise as to whether Reims will be regarded by the enemy as an open or a fortified town. The Reims folk's confidence has given place to deep anxiety. While those with the means of doing so are leaving, the streets and promenades become more and more crowded with refugees from the country. Most of these, crushed and silent, are seated on the kerbs and on the avenue seats, or lean up against the houses.

The Town Hall is choked with fugitives, even to the cellars; and the courtyards, as well as the square, are covered with them. Some scattered straw witnesses that they have slept there. At the requisitions office we are advised, after notes have been taken, to return home at once, as our offerings will be inspected very shortly.

So we return, and, sure enough, before ten minutes have passed, an army veterinary surgeon appears and says he is extremely pressed for time. After making an examination he asks our price. I tell him that of the carriage, but my lips refuse to utter the word which would condemn our faithful Rosette to the dreadful fate of the army horse. The poor creature looks kindly at us and gives a subdued whinny—her way of showing affection. I transfer the responsibility of sentencing her to Nelly, the real owner of the animal. Nelly stammers and turns to her uncle, who abruptly walks away. The veterinary becomes impatient: sweat runs down my face. I lower my head and murmur the words in so low a voice that I believe I am only thinking: "Leave her to us, Mr. Officer." For a couple

of seconds I feel his eyes on me, and then, without a word, he salutes and withdraws. Our hostess and Nelly go with him. Left to myself, I put my arms round Rosette's neck and embrace her tenderly.

A few moments later, some relations of Madame X. come in to help us put into a safe place the jewels and other precious objects lying about on her furniture and shelves. The visitors describe to us the hiding-place which they built with their own hands in their cellar. They have widened and strengthened the ventilators of this cellar so that they may escape should the house be struck by a shell and fall about their ears after they have gone to ground. Our friend listens to them in astonishment and then chaffs them: "They are cowards," she says to us after they are gone; "for a good fortnight they have been deliberating whether to leave or stay."

We are sitting in the garden. The noise of the guns never ceases, but comes closer and closer and growls uninterruptedly and insistently from all four points of the compass. At times the gusts of noise are prolonged and vibrate like the rolling of endless thunder;

sometimes we hear claps as though huge doors were being slammed to by the wind; and now and then one would think that a Cyclops were shaking a monstrous tub containing a hundred tons of brass.

With evening comes Father Jude to tell us that his relations from Pont-Faverger, nineteen in number, are at his house. During their journey on foot they saw terrible things happening in the distance. Sommepy is in flames; Sainte-Marie-à-Py and Tahure too. The inhabitants are fleeing through the iron hail or have been flung back into the furnace by the backwash of the armed waves fighting for possession of the country. Their cries of misery and horror, blended with the howling of dogs and the bellowings of the herds, can be heard ten kilometres away. Rethel has been bombarded and burned; fighting is going on at Aussonce; carnage reigns everywhere under a sky so softly blue. The horizon flames blood-red. This is the carnival of iron and fire.

Madame X., quite imperturbable, insists that the enemy is retreating and that our soldiers are winning.

Thursday, September 3.

Rather to humour her friends than to go back on herself, our hostess has made up her mind to put together her treasures and have the boxes containing them carried down into the cellar.

With the help of Nelly and me she arranges the boxes in a corner on an improvised floor, and covers them with a heap of coal. Which done, without a trace of feeling she devotes herself again to her duties as mistress of the house.

It looks as if the change of air and diet is curing my husband's bronchitis. We endeavour to picture the fate reserved for the capital of Champagne by the Germans, and the character that the occupation will assume. We make guesses at what will happen to us personally—to us who tried to give the enemy the slip. By all reports it looks as if one should be safer in an important and properly administered town than in an out-of-the-way hamlet, where no control is exercised and no protection afforded. But the sack of Louvain, which was known here the day before yesterday, seems to falsify such reasoning.

There comes in a friend of Madame X., a notary. As he has no motor-car — his has been requisitioned—he asks Father Jude to drive with him to fetch his very old and infirm mother, living some kilometres away, who has sent urgently to say she would like to be moved to Reims. Pierre considers that there is not a moment to be lost, and offers Rosette and the phaeton, as being much lighter and swifter than the lorry and horse belonging to the house.

The little train over the way has stopped running along its rails beside the embankment.

Its work is done: no more whistlings, no more breathless panting, no more pitiful convoys. The town is contracting. They say that no soldiers are left in Reims. Through the garden railings and the open windows famished children beg for bread, scraps, water —anything to appease their hunger and thirst. The absence of the usual noises renders their distressful cries all the more heart-breaking.

In the afternoon a neighbour in close touch with the Town Hall tells us that Reims has been declared an open city: that the Municipality has guaranteed the ransom that may be

exacted by the enemy. Soon afterwards my husband, who has gone out to get news, returns with a copy of an announcement by the mayor asking the population to remain calm, forbidding assemblies, laying down rules of conduct in case of occupation, and ordering the immediate surrender of arms. The city's fate has therefore been decided officially. So cruel are the times that, although in our heart of hearts we feel Paris and France to be in great danger, this decision gives us the kind of comfort which one experiences on learning that a dying loved one has ceased to suffer.

Nelly and I put the contents of our valises into the cupboards in our bedrooms and hide the valises in the granary, to conceal from the invader the fact that we are refugees and so escape being stripped and expelled from the town as such.

The notary and Father Jude have had a successful trip. They were only just in time, as the grey tide of Germans is now washing round the gates of Reims, so they say. The drayman, when he comes to put the horse away, tells us that on the road a strange French soldier stepped out of a column on the

march, came up to him, and made him swear to recite an Ave Maria on his behalf for nine days. By way of a souvenir and to show his gratitude the soldier gave him a small sacred medallion, which he produces. Father Jude will not go back on his word.

Friday, September 4.

We do not always get our earliest news from Father Jude, who comes at about six or seven o'clock to see to the horses. For close to us there are two shop-watchmen, Remy and Terron, formerly in service here, who often come to bring us their budget of news as soon as we are awake. This morning the drayman has not turned up. He is resolved not to serve the enemy in any way whatever, and so he led away his employers' horse during the night, and the two have taken refuge in a small house hidden among the thick trees of a garden outside the town. On going downstairs I find the wife of one of the shop-watchmen trying to persuade Madame X. that the Germans really are in Reims: "For I can assure you that Terron found himself within a yard of a patrol of four Uhlans at the corner of

the Rue Libergier." Remy comes up and adds: "Yes! they are going up and down the Rue de Vesle continuously." Our friend, displeased and unconvinced, turns her back on her informants, but—what is not usual with her—says nothing.

At about nine o'clock Pierre expresses the desire to go and find out what really is happening in the town. I ask to be allowed to go with him. Madame X., who, so she says, has not been out of the house for a fortnight, says she wants to come with us. In less than no time we are all ready to start. Nelly, the slave of her child, cannot get away so early in the morning, and stays at home with the maid.

We turn our steps towards the Rue de Vesle. To get there we must go along the Chaussée du Port, cross the Rue Libergier, and take the Rue Payen. On the way our friend stops us to show us several properties belonging to her son. After turning the corner of the Rue Libergier she rings at a door, but nobody answers and all the blinds are drawn. To examine the upper floors better she steps back into the middle of the street, and I follow

her; and at this moment my eyes turn towards the Cathedral which, like a great green-gold shrine, glitters in the slanting rays of the sun. The plane trees on the pavements wave their branches before it, and the first red and yellow leaves falling to earth seem as if they wished to spread a sumptuous carpet before Notre-Dame. Never have I seen anything so majestic.

My husband has gone ahead of us along the Rue de Vesle. We catch him up. Ah! it would be difficult now to deny that the Prussians are in Reims. Their cars flash along the street in both directions at a giddy speed; splendid vehicles, in which happy-faced officers, whose triumphant look is quite indescribable, disport themselves. Some of them greet the crowd with forced and apparently ironical smiles; others blow kisses with their gloved hands to the young and pretty women seen at the windows. In each car, behind the officers, are four or six armed soldiers, standing or kneeling, facing the houses on both sides the street and ready to throw up their rifles. It looks as if the mayor's notice forbidding people to collect or stand about has been disregarded; for surely

never did so many loafers line the street and exchange opinions. . . . Now and then a municipal policeman tries to make people move on, but nobody heeds. I feel ashamed when I compare the stunted, stooping, puny men of Reims with the tall, straight, sturdy specimens of the German race now passing.

Our hostess knows every one here, and everybody knows her. She speaks to one, answers another, ventures on to the street in defiance of orders, keeps stopping. This gets on Pierre's nerves. "I think," says he, "that we shouldn't stay here among all this crowd. It is unwise to do so. Let us go straight to the Royal Square, or go home again." The words are hardly out of his mouth when a mighty explosion raises the echoes! Nobody takes any notice. We are abreast of Saint-Jacques Church when a second explosion occurs. That makes people turn round and ponder. "There! they are celebrating their entry by blank fire." But the haughty Prussian officers, who keep on passing, begin to frown and look astonished. We reach the Theatre. A third explosion! This time loud cries are heard. Looking behind us, we see the lower end of

the Rue de Vesle filled with dust and smoke; the sunshine is dimmed by it. Everybody begins to run. From all sides people shout at us: "They are bombarding us; take cover; get back home!" In the Royal Square the inquisitive people round the statue of Louis xv., who had climbed up on to the plinth, scatter in all directions, saying that the Germans have signalled them to get to cover. Mothers with babies rush off, uttering piercing cries; children sob and won't walk; men pommel and push the women riveted to the spot by fear. The streets are emptied in a twinkling, while the shells follow one another methodically and fall with a great uproar. We are much upset, my husband and I. As we don't know our way about Reims and cannot see any vehicle able to carry us, we instinctively take the first street to the right that we come to—the Rue du Clôitre, which takes us to the apse of the Cathedral. Thence, by the Rue Robert-de-Coucy, we head for the Parvis, hurrying along our friend, whose serenity seems as great as ever. "Impossible, my dears," she says; "my heart trouble prevents me going fast. Go ahead without me." We offer her our arms;

but she refuses decidedly, pretending that it is too warm to hurry. We can't dream of leaving her, but how trying it is! I involuntarily quicken my pace and find myself a few yards ahead of the others. In the middle of the street, facing the gate of the Beau Dieu, two ecclesiastics in long cloaks, with still unmoved faces, have stopped and are coolly looking at the top of the north tower, partly hidden by a cloud of dust and screened by scaffolding, out of which fly a number of birds as large as pigeons. Strange objects, which at first I take to be bits of broken bottles, patter and jump on the pavement. I step forward to pick up one of these curious objects, and my hand has already been stretched out towards it when I realise its nature. It is death stalking about me. I feel afraid, and remain motionless, petrified, my eyes fixed mechanically on the sculptures of the lower part of the Cathedral, whose every detail now appears to me to stand out with extraordinary clearness. A short, haggard workman is dragging by the elbow a young woman who weeps and wraps her apron about a small child clasped in her arms. The man shouts at me: "Get away! They're aiming at the Cathedral!"

My husband and Madame X. catch me up. We want to retreat by the Rue du Trésor. Somehow or other we have worked round in a circle, and a few moments later we find ourselves in the Parvis Square. The whining and bursting of the shells become worse, and we rush off through an adjacent street, which leads us to the colonnade of the Theatre. We then feel that we are chasing our own tails, and we implore our hostess to take us home the shortest way possible. "All right, my dears, that will be by the Rue Libergier." We go round the Theatre and reach that street, a few yards from the Parvis Square. "Look there!" cries our friend, stopping and gazing upwards. "Look! A shell has fallen right on the Cathedral!" I can only see a cloud of dust or smoke, and the circling flight of the large birds; but the crash of shattered glass makes me shudder with fear. Madame X. suggests entering the Café Saint-Denis close by.

While she stops to knock on the door of this establishment, whose shutters are closed, as were all the shops and house doors we passed, I set off running, or rather an invisible force

seizes me by the arm and I am dragged from the Rue Libergier and hurled into the Rue Chanzy. A man hurrying past asks where I live; I tell him. He points the direction, and says something which the bursting of a shell prevents me from hearing. Madame X. cries: "Not that way! This way! This way!" I don't turn round. Pierre runs after me: "Isabelle! Isabelle! where are you off to there?" Without stopping, I shout back to him over my shoulder: "Quick! Quick!" No human argument would make me retrace my steps. The power which drags me forward dins into my ears: "Hurry! Hurry! Don't give way. On with you." I find myself in the Rue Hincmar. My husband, following a long way behind, begs me not to go so fast, because of our friend. I answer fiercely and resolutely: "Come! This is the way we should go!" Very fortunately Madame X. has given up the Rue Libergier and comes into sight eighty yards behind us. There is now not a living creature besides ourselves in the streets. Then begins for Pierre and me the most horrible torture. If we were alone, we should reach the Chaussée du Port in three minutes. I keep ahead, con-

vinced that we are going to be killed; our friend proceeds slowly; and my husband keeps running backwards and forwards between us, urging her, reassuring me. The shells whistle and screech overhead and burst all round us, throwing up masses of earth. When the prolonged crackling, as of silk being ripped, comes over, we instinctively, and quite futilely, flatten ourselves against a wall. Not once do we think of throwing ourselves flat on the ground, which, it appears, is the proper thing to do in such a case. A shell has just fallen at the corner of the Rue Clovis, making holes in the houses, tearing up the pavement, and breaking the telegraph line, the wires of which lie twisted in the roadway. Are we going to be blown to bits in this city of the dead ages, in this interminable street in which there is no one, no one, no one? Literally, I can't think of any more saints to invoke. So I appeal to the dead! "Mama, save me! Wherever you may be, hear me! Will you let us perish? Come, then, and help us!" Immediately Pierre comes within hearing distance I suggest that he should run on to reassure Nelly and open the house door, hoping that thus we shall

gain shelter more quickly. But I soon regret the suggestion, for, if he listened to it, it would perhaps mean his exposing himself to greater danger. At this moment I see him a few steps ahead of me, pointing to the steps of a house with the door partly opened. A lady leaning out of the window calls us in. I run inside, while my husband goes off to help Madame X. along.

We enter the ground floor, and I immediately recognise in the lady who has asked us in a business woman from Vouziers. She has taken refuge here with her daughter, an interpreter at the Hôtel Métropole. About a dozen people, lodgers on the upper floors, have gathered in the dining-room with its closed shutters, and loudly voice their fear in the half-darkness. A young mother, her hands grasping her bodice, and tears trickling down her face, faints into a chair, with her four little ones clinging to her skirts. The incident would be extremely pathetic if such a noise were not going on. But everybody—to keep his courage up, no doubt—will persist in chattering. When the whistling of a shell is heard, guesses are made as to where the shell will fall ; when it

bursts, one calculates the damage done. Stories are told of the previous war: how in 1870, while the Republic was being proclaimed in Paris, the Prussians entered Reims, bands playing and men goose-stepping, without harming any one. Finally, various comments, all of them quaint, are made on the bombardment of to-day. Suddenly a flying shell screams past more threateningly than ever before, and a terrible din follows, as if the entire town were going to rack and ruin. The whole house shakes from top to bottom. Not a word is spoken. I picture that the Cathedral has just crashed down, that the wondrous monstrance is laid low which was saluted by the tree branches in the sunshine of this morning. My heart is crushed with misery. Icy-cold and fever-hot waves run through me; I burn and shiver at the same time, and utter involuntary groans. They ask me if I feel ill or afraid. I am trembling too violently to be able to reply. I don't feel ill; and as for my terror, what is it compared with the horror of the crime perpetrated against Notre-Dame, our Immaculate Mother? Men gallop past, and tongues are loosened: "It is in the courtyard! In the

Rue Chabaud! In the house next door!" Somebody comes in and says: "It fell in the Rue Libergier, on the Technical School, where several people had already been killed by earlier shells." Gradually, I am able to breathe more freely. We are congratulated on not having taken the Rue Libergier, in which doubtless we should have met our deaths.

The projectiles now fall less frequently, and the hideous scourging dies away and stops.

When we leave this hospitable house, we are surprised to see again the sunshine and the blue heavens and feel once more the goodness of the air, already ridding itself of the foul gases. We have not two hundred yards to go to reach our house, but I don't know whether I shall ever get there; my legs are heavier than lead, my knees totter beneath me and I find it very difficult to walk. I have never experienced such a feeling as this in all my life before. To overcome it, I tell myself that Nelly, if she has not been struck, must be consumed by a cruel anxiety while waiting for us. When we come out on to the Chaussée du Port we hear another shell whiz past and see a man on the pavement opposite fling himself flat on his

stomach beside a heap of planks, hugging to him an angler's outfit.

Thank God! our hostess's house has not been touched! I am the first to get back. Doors, casements, venetian blinds are all open, for Nelly and the servant were too scared to think of closing them. They tell me that at first they took refuge in the cellar, where Hélène would not remain, as she was not the least disturbed by the cannonade. Nelly, being obliged to go upstairs again, had dressed the child in her best clothes and hastily thrown some things into a valise, so as to be ready to flee should a shell smash or ignite the house or yards. As for the servant, she had had no time even to think of getting lunch ready—and its preparation would have been time thrown away, since nobody but little Hélène is thinking of food. Immediately after coming indoors, Pierre goes to bed and falls asleep; and I, overpowered by a resistless need of sleep, sink down into an arm-chair, from which, I believe, another bombardment would not move me.

In the course of the afternoon people come in to give us details of the morning's happen-

ings. The batteries were firing from Meneux, four or five kilometres south-west of Reims. There must have been some mistake; the officer in command of the artillery cannot have known in time of the surrender of the town, and must have been unaware that, just when his guns came into action, the Staff was entering Reims and the Commissariat discussing the question of requisitions with the mayor. The firing had ceased only when some brave citizens devoted themselves to the task of running up, on the north tower of the Cathedral, a white flag made out of two sheets tied to a bundle of long broom-handles. Another version attributes the crime to the disappearance of two *parlementaires*, of the upper Prussian nobility, who had been sent to Reims—a disappearance for which the people of Reims would be held responsible. Then, finally, some saw in the attack the natural result of the system of terrorism used by the Germans in conquered country. Whatever the real facts of the case may be, we have to deplore about sixty killed and two hundred wounded. The Cathedral, except for some broken windows, a hole in the north façade, and some damaged

carvings, has not suffered much damage. The church of Saint-Remy has fared worse. The Rues de Vesle and Libergier and the streets near Saint-Remy have been most knocked about; many houses have been demolished, and some fires have broken out. We hear dreadful details: children cut to pieces, girls beheaded in the street or indoors, women blown in two, entrails and brains scattered on the walls, whole families wiped out. Great is our consternation.

When the mourning city is shrouded in the silence of night, triumphant choruses, in which men's deep voices are skilfully blended, rise from the Parvis Square, where some German detachments are bivouacking. From the Faubourg de Paris solemn, weird songs of glory answer them.

Saturday, September 5.

My husband goes off on his own account, and Madame X., Nelly, Hélène and I leave the house to see with our own eyes the effects of the bombardment. The streets are strewn with broken glass, and here and there display great holes excavated by the shells. The

Technical School in the Rue Libergier still has its front standing, but its interior is utterly ruined. Several women and children found their deaths here. Close by, a little servant-maid was struck down at the entrance to the kitchen. In the Rue de Vesle we are shown the closed shutters of a druggist's shop, through which a shell splinter passed and killed the druggist's son, a boy of fourteen. In the same street some houses have been gutted, others three parts burned.

We then proceed to the Quartier Saint-Remy. The church has been badly damaged outside; one transept vault has been smashed in by a shell, which burst on the pavement and did extraordinary damage to the inside. The shop-keepers in the streets round about have not yet recovered from their fright. Not far from the church a vehicle laden with coffins is standing in front of an unpretentious-looking house, in which, it is said, eleven people were killed. The people living in this thickly populated district, finding themselves heavily bombarded, would have fled into the big champagne cellars, which the Municipality were to open in case of need, but, finding the cellars shut, had

been obliged to roam about, exposed to the shells.

In the course of our walk we meet many Germans. They stroll quietly along, invade the shops, and fill their huge pockets with eatables, which they pay for with requisition vouchers. They seem to be polite. . . . These solidly built men, the very personification of health, block the roads with their massive bodies and make the pavement ring under their boots. Their sunburnt faces are those of well-fed, well-cared-for, hardy men. Their eyes, in most cases grey-blue, are not at all wicked-looking, but rather timid. Their clean-shaven faces are, in the main, fair or ruddy. They are very comfortably clothed and shod, and their equipment is noteworthy in all its details.

In the Rue du Barbâtre, at the Enfant-Jésus hospital, two German majors are explaining matters politely to some ladies of the French Red Cross. They are making arrangements for the entry of one of their vehicles into the building. Some civilians, workmen or refugees, rush forward in the desire to put their shoulders to the wheels or open the outer gate. A few

words and a gesture from the majors, who carry whips, soon send them flying.

After making the round of a number of houses that have come to grief, more or less, we arrive, very tired, at the Archbishop's palace, near the Cathedral, and I am delighted to see that it is still standing unscathed in all its majesty. Continuing on our way, we reach the Lion-d'Or hotel, facing the south tower. In the Parvis Square many soldiers have encamped beside the statue of Jeanne D'Arc, with their rifles piled in rows near them. They are singing songs, and many, as they sing, clean their rifles or sharpen their bayonets. Others have stripped and are washing themselves; one, a huge albino, towels his herculean body vigorously. They interrupt these various occupations only to eat. Behind them travelling kitchens are busy, close to canteens and commissariat waggons. The open ground where the old prison—now destroyed—stood is occupied by hobbled horses, very fine animals in good condition, recently branded and of so many different breeds that one notices the fact at once. Among them I recognise some good specimens of the fine Ardennes breed, which

has been improved so carefully on the farms in the Attigny canton. These, no doubt, have not yet had time to reconcile themselves to German discipline, for with nostrils open they neigh most distressingly in their longing to return to their pastures. The camp as a whole gives off a peculiar, disagreeable, sickening odour, reminding me of the hateful mustiness of 1870, when I, then quite a small girl, did not know where to hide myself away beyond reach of the stench given off by the Germans quartered on us at Charleville. We then attributed the effluvium to their diet, which was as wretched as their equipment. To-day they are splendidly provided, and observe the strictest rules of hygiene; yet the smells are the same, or worse.

The Lion-d'Or hotel appears to be the headquarters of the General Staff, the meeting-place of superior officers, who drive up at high speed in luxurious open cars. Their behaviour is beyond criticism, their carriage stiff, and they wear very simple uniforms, which, however, are of splendid cloth and perfect cut. Their great height, their way of walking, their automatically rhythmical move-

ments, speak of long, patient exercises to make them lissom, and of the gymnastics which they underwent to give their bodies this particular kind of geometrical perfection. Many of them are young, some very young. The stern-faced elders preserve an astonishing youthfulness. I notice that a great number of these officers—and those not the least .haughty of them—have faces seamed with old scars. All of them, when they catch sight of the Cathedral, have eyes for it only. I cannot convey the look of triumphant joy which comes into their blue eyes; but my heart is heavy to see it, for it is not one of mere admiration, but reveals rather the brutal satisfaction of greed.

These splendid warriors are joined by a woman, who alights from a black *fiacre* drawn by a white horse. She too is tall and well built. Without owing anything to manner or carriage, she looks the sister or equal of the Junkers entering or leaving the Lion-d'Or. The Cathedral does not seem to interest her. She persists in staring haughtily over the heads of the Reims folk, who have flocked into the Parvis. I set this lady down as practically-minded and extremely vain. She wears a

white dress, a long black sash, and a white hat with a black veil. . . . When I get home I find my husband watching for my return. He has been reading the German proclamations. In one of them the military authorities, after assuring the population of their goodwill, warn the inhabitants that if they indulge in the least disorder, or interfere with the soldiers, they will be punished in their lives and possessions, the innocent paying for the guilty. In another, the refugees from the Marne, the Aisne and the Ardennes are invited to return home under the protection of a safe-conduct, which will be given out at the Town Hall, and be viséd by the Kommandantur, at the Lion-d'Or. For the time being, the townspeople will not have troops billeted on them, as these will be distributed among the barracks, while their officers will occupy the hotels.

After lunch, I want to go and read the edicts for myself. But first I feel I must visit Notre-Dame. One can no longer enter it by the great doorway ; only the small northern door is open. Inside, the traces of yesterday's attack have not yet disappeared, and the floor is covered with stones, fragments of sculptures

and broken glass. But no further damage is visible. The Cathedral, almost unscathed, is as lovely as ever, perhaps more lovely and more impressive, considering what it has just been through. Few, very few, of the Reims people are present there at their devotions, but many Germans, officers and soldiers,—Saxons, they are said to be,—walk about reverently, commune with themselves, pray. The Jeanne du Sacre in the chancel, ill at ease in her covering of precious materials, lowers her eyes, and seems to be on the verge of tears.

On leaving this sacred place I turn my steps towards the Town Hall. When I reach the square I am surprised to see some strange caryatids matching the pilasters at the top of the steps. A closer view shows me that these caryatids are German sentries, standing so motionless in their uniform—which is of exactly the same tint as the stone—that they may well have deceived me. An infantry detachment is encamped in front of the building, and the scene is a repetition of that in the Parvis, minus the horses. I get close to the posters. They are written in French so bad and in so heavy a style that their ferocious character becomes

grotesque. I should like to make a copy of them, but there are too many other readers standing in front of me, and the sentries keep people moving by threatening them with the butt-ends of their rifles. So I will copy them some other day.

Pierre has been to the Hôtel Métropole to thank the ladies who helped us yesterday. A horse perished in their stables, which were destroyed by shells. Some folk from Vouziers whom Pierre met there are proposing to return to Ardennes next Monday, and the hotel staff are pulling the strings at the Lion d'Or to get a safe-conduct both ways for a hired horse and carriage. The Kommandantur may have promised to protect the refugees, but has not committed itself as regards animals and vehicles, so people are a bit mistrustful. This, too, is why the emigrants in general prefer travelling on foot to any other mode of transport since the notice was posted. In the Royal Square some of the leading people of Charleville were preparing to return to their city together on foot, and, as the wife of one of them is ill, they were getting a hand-cart to take her in, which they will push in turn.

While my husband was talking with these Charleville people, Prince Augustus Wilhelm alighted from his car near the Louis xv. Monument, saluted the crowd in an affable and patronising manner, and, followed by two officers, walked off to the Town Hall. He is a tall, slender young fellow with a beardless face, at once proud and gracious; he wears his full cloak of the well-known light blue with ease.

Pierre saw also at the Hôtel Métropole some officers come to sample the champagne. They speak French very well, without any accent, and are obviously pleased to enter into conversation with French people. According to what they have been taught—or it may be a case of mass-suggestion—it is Germany who has been attacked and is fighting to protect herself. Russia, there's the enemy! The successes won by her in August make them smile! At the moment the Germans are crushing the Russians, and the Great General Staff has decided upon the destruction of the Slavs and Slavism. . . . They could never forgive England for taking a hand in the struggle. If they have acted harshly in Belgium it is because the population behaved badly, the women going

so far as to throw boiling water at the soldiers. They declare that they have no ill-feeling towards France, who ought to be on good terms with Germany; but as the French sided with the Russians, the Germans had been regretfully compelled to march against us. "As I speak," said one of the officers decisively, "we have three armies in front of Paris, and the Governor must have been called upon to surrender in twenty-four hours. If he has not surrendered at the end of the twenty-fourth hour, Paris will be bombarded and blown to bits." According to them, the bombardment of Reims with mere field-guns was nothing to compare with the bombardments of the Liége and Namur forts—effected with 420 m.m. mortars, a single shell from which is sufficient to destroy the most modern fortification. Also, the surrender of Paris is a foregone conclusion. They are very sarcastic about the French army, which they have never caught sight of, owing to its anxiety to retreat well ahead of them. Finally—again I quote the officers—Reims got out of it very well this afternoon. The two missing *parlementaires* have not been found, and if they had not been tracked as far as Epernay, so proving

the innocence of the Reims people, the town would have paid dearly for their disappearance.

Sunday, September 6.

At dawn I repaired to Notre-Dame. German soldiers and officers were present at the first Masses. The growling of cannon, telling how millions of men ransomed by the blood of Christ alone were butchering one another in the glorious morning sun, blended with the blessings of the service. What could these cunning fellows be thinking of as they prostrated themselves? Were they asking God to pardon them for unloosing the dogs of war, for their massacres in Belgium and Lorraine?

While leaving the Cathedral I meet a charwoman who is known at Madame X.'s. She was wounded on Friday in the head and arms by shell splinters and taken to the hospital, and, though still in great pain, has just been turned out to make room for the many German wounded now coming in.

In the afternoon German merriment gives itself free rein in the ancient royal city. One hears music and singing everywhere. Soldiers are allowed to walk about without their formid-

able rifles, and promenade in troops, making the asphalt ring under their heavy heels. We can see from our windows that their pockets are stuffed with dainties. They eat as they go along, munching fruit tarts, licking at pots of preserve, greedily puffing large lighted cigars. Some women of the street hover about them, follow them, accost them; but they are too busy with their guzzling, and push them away or shake them, but without doing more than that to discourage them.

The air grows heavy as if a storm were approaching. I feel limp and worn out. I think of Roche and of Paris. What wouldn't I give to know what is happening there! Nelly is out with her little girl, Pierre is gone after news, and I am alone with my hostess. She is locking up all her valuable books and, seeing my depression, she lets me look at some of these splendid works. But I turn their leaves without any enjoyment or even paying any heed to them.

Monday, September 7.

I go with my friend to her son-in-law's house. We find there, in the rooms specially equipped to accommodate wounded, two Germans, fair-

haired, tall, stout, round-faced young peasants, who receive us standing up, with a slight smile. Their wounds—bayonet thrusts—are not very serious. They have to go into the town every day to get them dressed. Ever since they have been in the house they have been asking for bread and soup in a language which the housewife cannot understand—for the wounded that cannot be accommodated in the hospitals are fed at the cost of the inhabitants. They seem very gentle, and regret the war on account of the evils it brings with it, and because it has compelled them to leave their families and daily work.

On the way back we walk along the side of the canal. An officer looking over the moored boats stops on the gangway to one of them in front of a pretty boy, picks him up, kisses him, and says tearfully that the mite reminds him of his own yonder in Germany. As soon as he leaves the boat the mother, with a sly look after the officer, confides to us that the arms belonging to her husband, who has gone to the war, are too well hidden to be found.

At lunch Pierre tells us that he saw a batch of French prisoners drawn up near the Vesle

bridge, packed tightly in motor waggons. Although exhausted, they carried themselves well. The populace thronged round them, distributing delicacies.

Tuesday, September 8.

The guns are thundering terribly in the distance, right in front of us and to our left. . . .

Wednesday, September 9.

The firing to the south-west is incessant, and seems to come nearer. What is happening? We can get no reliable news and we never see a paper. At any rate it appears certain that Paris has not been taken.

We are very perplexed about what to do, as we do not wish to prolong our stay in Reims. For the time being the only thing possible would be to return to Roche, with the help of a German safe-conduct; but we should run the risk of finding there nothing but ruins and the impossibility of getting away from them. And should we be able to procure the food which a convalescent and a delicate child cannot do without? As long as we are here, Rosette's milk serves as a makeshift for that which the

milkwoman now delivers only irregularly. But once on the road, won't our mare tempt some thief of the Prussian remount department? We are told that some refugees who set out for their homes were stopped on the way and had their horses and vehicles requisitioned, and that the women while waiting for their husbands to return with them were obliged to wash or cook for the enemy. In any case, it would be absolutely necessary to find out what is going on in our village before undertaking the journey. The Vouziers folk who left on Monday promised to send back word by their driver, but what we shall learn from him will apply to Vouziers only. There is one possible means of getting to know—by asking the German officers. I am sure my husband wouldn't take such a step, and should I venture on it myself? There is said to be a Saxon General Staff among the troops occupying Reims. Now, a little time ago we received from Leipzig some spontaneous expressions of consideration and regard. One of the writers may perhaps be included among the officers of this General Staff. I should have to go, then, to the Kommandantur and, if I were allowed

to interview an officer, to introduce myself under the protection of my brother Arthur's name and of my husband's assumed name. No! I could never do that! Should I be bolder in dealing with a woman? There are some officers' wives at the Lion-d'Or, and I met some of their Red Cross ladies at the Cathedral. Should I apply to them? Or to that woman in black and white, who is everywhere, whom I see every day? She is very haughty; her eyes take no notice of anything, and look over everybody's head so that they shall not meet those of French people. Then . . . No! Could one ask any favour of an enemy?

I wander through the city in quest of news. Some small tradesfolk, poor people and refugees, though strangers to each other, stand in groups talking and offering sympathy. I go up to them and listen, sometimes asking questions in the vague hope of meeting a peasant who has escaped lately from Attigny canton and will be able to give me some definite news of Roche. However, I dare not stand long near the groups, as gatherings have been strictly vetoed by the Governor, and the

municipal police enforce his orders in a kind of terror.

To-day we may no longer cross the Parvis Square, and only people provided with a pass can get at the Hôtel Lion-d'Or. A great many wounded have been brought into Reims, and you may see them walking about in the streets in dirty, blood-stained bandages, which they will no doubt get replaced. The officers are not so affable as they were at first, but are stiff, preoccupied, anxious.

I betake myself through the Rue Robert-de-Coucy to Notre-Dame, my beacon and guide, where I receive, if not the highest counsel, which often is above my understanding, at least the impelling force which will carry me onward or the shock which holds me spellbound, in accordance with the mysterious designs of God.

In the great church in which France was baptized and consecrated in the persons of her kings, the foes of France are praying. I shall long be haunted by the sight of an officer—one of high rank, to judge by the fullness and colour of his cloak—who, with forehead touching the pavement and his hands clasped together, was lost in meditations which no

passing of people, no noise could interrupt. I should have liked to see his face; for perhaps to him, amid such surroundings, I might have dared to put the question which obsesses me. I waited; but he remained motionless as a dead man.

Henceforward the town of Reims seems to me as if sundered from the rest of the universe by an impassable barrier: an oppressive night in which no sound echoes, no gleam of light shines. It is also a prison, wherein the greatest of chatterers is silenced and the hardiest lowers his eyes before the strictness of the rules and the brutal harshness of the gaolers. Here only that tremendous power, the German army, grows strong and reigns on high—that army which, when examined both as a whole and in detail, provokes our unwilling admiration. It seems perfect throughout. It is a gigantic machine, with all its parts fitting like those of an instrument of precision. It is a whole race shaped with a patient and jealous care to fit itself for its proud destiny—the conquest and absorption of the world. What humbles the proudest spirit in presence of this organism is to see the unanimous and absolute support

given it by the federated nations, the pride shown by all these men, from the humblest private to the Kaiser, in their part in it. One feels here the existence of a tacit contract to which all parties are bound by private as well as common interests. It astonishes one that a genius of policy, adopting the realisation of this mighty dream as its only creed, has had sufficient force to grip these nations body and soul, to fit their every fibre for its paradoxical scheme of domination, and hypnotise them to the point of making them lose their individuality.

In the face of this formidable solidarity, of this disciplined co-operation of millions and millions of human beings, what is going to become of France, divided against herself, an unconscious sinner, a still unrepentant Magdalen, a creature of vain thoughts, exhausting herself by empty verbiage and rash gestures, squandering her moral patrimony in the hypocritical selfishness of the *bourgeois*, the calculating jealousy of the workman, the general sensuality, dissipating her material resources on childish pleasures? Ah! poor France, beautiful, charitable France, what will

your punishment be! Your heedlessness, your want of foresight—are they then unpardonable? Yet you still have live forces left in you. I know some saints and I know of some lamps still burning. . . .

Thursday, September 10.

The noise of cannon keeps getting nearer and nearer. Yet this morning it comes to us more intermittently through the dark, heavy atmosphere, which is disturbed by gusts of wind.

By mere self-concentration, thoughts and looks may be hypnotised; so much so that in the presence of facts one may think oneself dreaming. Yet they are not a dream, these apparitions of the material of war whirled southwards at giddy speed. With tails streaming in the wind, black or bay horses in silver-plated harness and ridden by wild gunners, urging them on without mercy, gallop along the street, dragging amid an uproar like that of the Apocalypse those metallic lightnings, the guns. They are accompanied by the pantings of motors, violent displacements of air and sand flung up from the street. The whirlwind of bronze and steel disappears, and now pass the

less noisy but equally imposing ammunition trains, which are overtaken by huge motor chars-à-bancs crammed with soldiers, and are followed by travelling kitchens.

Masses of infantry are entering Reims again across the Vesle bridge, from the Faubourg de Paris ; and the gusts from the south waft to us more and more clearly the rage of the cannon. Ambulance waggons, too, are returning past the Port yards. When their curtains are jolted open by the rough *pavé* you can see bloody heads and arms and limp bodies. Some requisitioned carts, drawn by starved-looking horses and led by peasants walking beside them, follow the ambulances. These carts are piled with wounded men thrown in one on the top of the other—you would think them to be corpses, did they not now and then writhe in agony. The mournful procession is closed by a string of low-sided drays, with rigid shapes outlined under the grey blankets. Whence these nightmare processions? Whither are they going? I call to mind that last night some officers of the engineers came to raid the Port yards for great beams which, they said, would be useful for reparing the Guignicourt

bridge over the Aisne. They seemed in a great hurry. Nobody dared to question them, though they talked French and said amiably enough that war is a great misfortune and that one has to do disagreeable things, but war is war. I compare that incident with what I see to-day.

In the afternoon I go in the direction of the Cathedral. The Rue Libergier is closed; the Rue Chanzy barricaded. So I turn to the left through the Rue du Théâtre, and try the Rue du Trésor. A gentleman, the police inspector no doubt, who was keeping the approaches to the Lion-d'Or clear yesterday, rushes in front of me with arms extended to block the road. His forehead drips with perspiration, and his voice breaks as he says, "No passage this way."

So I have to follow the Rue Carnot to the lovely courtyard of the Chapter House, which I cross to reach the Rue du Préau. I catch sight of my husband in the Rue Robert-de-Coucy and join him. We enter the Hôtel Métropole. Officers come in, clanking their spurs and sabres, jerk out an order to the porter, and leave again without any show of ordinary politeness. I notice that a general

silence falls when they are present. The hotel manager whispers in my ear, "Hush! hush! We don't know what they are after, but certainly there is something up."

Instead of going to the Cathedral, the approaches to which are held by troops, I visit the Town Hall to read the German official bulletins, issued in French. These speak of fighting on the Marne, Ourcq and Oise, and give technical details which we civilians cannot understand. I return by the way I came. The number of troops moving in the streets is incredibly large: they represent all arms and all the German States. Among them you see not only the blue-eyed, red-faced giants of the North, but the shorter and darker Southern types—Bavarians, Wurtemburgers, Saxons.

The fine Cloister and University streets behind the Cathedral are full of horses tethered to iron pegs. I am told that their riders spent last night lying on the bare pavement in front of their mounts.

I return by the Rue de Vesle. Motor-cars pass one another with the speed of arrows, regardless of anything that may get in their way. Their occupants, elderly officers for the

most part, wear scowling faces, which the shopkeepers view nervously and askance from the depths of their shops. The tobacco store in the Rue Payen has been sacked, and poor people are crowding before its doors, from which soldiers emerge with packets of snuff which they lay on the pavement. They fill their caps with the brown powder and scatter it abroad, while women struggle to catch some in their aprons, and men collect it from the ground and carry it away in their kerchiefs or caps.

Towards evening, just as the rain begins to fall, two reports are heard in the direction of the Avenue de Paris. One runs anxiously to find out what it means: a poor madman who has fired some blank cartridges, or at any rate not done any harm—so we are told. Orders are at once given to search his house. The man cannot be found, but a fire is started without more ado, and, as any attempt to extinguish the flames is forbidden, the house next door also is burnt down.

Wednesday, September 11.

All night long we have been kept awake by

the rumbling of waggons and artillery re-entering Reims through the Avenue de Paris. When day comes—a day of rain—we can see them from the steps of our retreat crossing the Vesle bridge on our right in an endless procession, and making their way along the street of the same name. A great number of infantry are passing now, and the cannonade to the south-west swells, becomes more rapid, and comes nearer and nearer. One doesn't know whether to be pleased by this or depressed. It looks as if a battle would soon be fought for Reims as the prize. We cannot gather from the conflicting reports whether the French or the English are trying to deliver us. One can only conclude that a battle will be fought—and we see visions of Louvain and Dinant!

Large motor lorries have been drawn up on the Chaussée du Port in front of the yards and are being loaded by the soldiers with great logs, taken without leave asked. From our house we can see the dray horses slipping on the wood paving now greasy with mud, falling down and staggering on to their legs again under the vigorous oaths and blows of their drivers. The rifling of the tobacco store in the Rue

Payen is still going on, and people are passing our windows with tobacco which they offer for money or for nothing. Others are incensed with the Germans for their wanton pillage of 50,000 francs' worth of snuff, and would like to do them a nasty turn. The story goes that in the cafés and restaurants to-night officers settled their bills with whip-cuts, that tradesmen have been cuffed and threatened with death, and that the soldiers filled their pockets in the shops and gave abuse as payment. The populace is becoming exasperated, and trouble may occur. The officers' behaviour makes it certain that, should the firing of yesterday be repeated, the result would be general pillage, massacre, incendiarism and the destruction of the town. I can think of but one thing now—to leave Reims. Better return to Roche and find dead ashes than face the horrors of slaughter here.

Immediately after lunch I slip off to the Town Hall to get passports. The massive forms of Germans are stretched on straw and mattresses in the vestibule and large hall to the left. Some of the Reims police, almost silly with fright, to whom I explain my errand,

direct me to the first floor. I go up, and find myself in a great room about which are scattered several clerks writing at makeshift desks. Some refugees are here too, no doubt on the same errand as myself. They are packed off quickly. When my turn comes, I conclude my application with a question which seems to puzzle the scribe: "Would it be possible, sir, first to find out what are the conditions now prevailing at the place to which we want to return?" He passes me on to another, and he to a third; and so on, till one of them deigns to reply and point out how impossible it is for the Municipality to provide itself with information about the invaded districts. Seeing how vexed I am at this, he asks me if any urgent reason summons us back to the Ardennes. I reply in the negative, and state that, as my husband is ill and I have a young child with me, I must inquire about the safety of the roads as well as about the state of things in the places to which we wish to return. My questioner reflects a little. "If that is so, madame," says he, "believe me, you will do well to defer your journey." Then he adds confidentially in a low voice: "We haven't any

news from outside; but you will have noticed how unusually flush the troops are to-day. What is going on here makes one suppose that a trap is being laid for the French army, or that the Germans have been defeated. In my opinion the town will be safer than the roads to-morrow, so, if you have a lodging in Reims, don't leave it at present." Hardly has he finished speaking, when a side door opens and an officer comes in. The clerk hurriedly resumes his writing, without looking up or taking any more notice of me.

I make for home. No way of crossing the Rue Carnot now, so full is it of soldiers. From the high point where I am the view extends to the Vesle bridge, beyond which one can see nothing but masses of Germans, in serried ranks and perfect order, heading for the Faubourg Cérès. Some horsemen have halted on the pavements, and with backs to the houses constitute a kind of embankment to contain the undulating waves of infantry which bristle with helmet spikes and rifle muzzles. Not a false movement, not a single unnecessary order; merely the vast, fateful, measured cadence of the march.

I retreat on the Port through side streets—and the rain—and meet many pitiful-looking wounded, wandering about in clumsy dressings. Many of these lie on the pavement and block the gutters. Is it believable that this marvellous organisation washes its hands of the human element, once it is of no more use to it? Or perhaps the sanitary staff is inadequate to deal with the growing number of wounded? I notice that all the officers whom I meet driving their cars at a more furious speed than ever have a set and angry look on their faces.

On my return, Madame X. tells my husband this: that about four o'clock an officer of high rank arrived at the Town Hall dripping wet, in a car that seemed to have come a long way. He addressed the troops encamped in the square from the top of the steps, and as they listened the soldiers, looking very dismayed, threw down their caps and spat all together—doubtless a kind of rite—uttering dismal cries the while. The Reims people present inferred from this action that the Germans had received some bad news.

The rain continues falling in torrents, and

the cannon roar. About nine o'clock, as we sit chatting round the lamp, there is knocking on the shutters. We open the door, and find some officers come to tell us that they are loading up wood; and, indeed, on the other side of the street, by the Port, a lorry has already been loaded. Despite our attempts to dissuade her, our friend, accompanied by the servant, goes off, lamp in hand, towards the yard. When she comes back she informs us that the Germans told her that to-morrow would be a decisive day for Reims, and that she should keep indoors, cut off the gas and electricity, and promptly take to the cellar should there be street-fighting.

Saturday, September 12.

Such food as we can procure in war-time in occupied towns is very unsuitable for delicate people. The diet he has to put up with has caused Pierre serious stomachic trouble which must be dealt with at once. So I go out very early to the Rue de Vesle to buy the materials needed for removing it.

Yesterday's rain has made large pools in which is reflected a sky heavy with dark clouds.

The muddy, dung-strewn street is occupied by a double row of cannon with their muzzles pointing westwards. The artillerymen stand ready beside their guns. Suddenly the peremptory report of a gun is heard quite close! Then a salvo! German infantry from the farther end of the street rush past without helmet or rifle, waving their arms and shouting to the artillerymen: "Weicht! weicht!" A second salvo answers the first, and the firing comes nearer, and is plainer and crisper than before. Shaking from head to foot, I rush away and regain the house just as the shutters and doors are being closed.

The fighting has begun . . .! And not only that, but it is quite close to us, just opposite, on the farther side of the canal to the south-west. Onlookers in the "front boxes" pray God that they may not fall victims to what is going on behind that screen of poplar trees. But how can we shelter ourselves? The cellars of the houses along the Port are uninhabitable, as water finds its way into them after the least shower, and ours are six inches deep in it now. My husband selects a back room on the ground floor, whose iron windows

and thick walls will afford some protection, so long as the fighting is confined to the other bank of the canal. If the Germans presently decide to dispute Reims with the French district by district, the houses of the Chaussée du Port will be the first to act as trenches, once the Faubourg de Paris is carried, and will therefore be the first smashed and destroyed. And what of the people in them? We think of Dinant and Louvain!

Inside our clothes we have secreted a few precious objects from which we would not part on any account. We have brought down our wraps and placed them handy; we are clothed and booted, ready for flight. Standing or sitting in this chamber of refuge, huddled into corners or sitting in arm-chairs, we wait and listen. In the least gloomy spot Madame X. knits away, apparently unmoved. Nelly takes up some sewing so that, as she says, she may hear things less distinctly. Pierre is fidgety and cannot keep still. The cannonade bursts out into all kinds of noises—coughings, snorings, groanings, bellowings, crackings. By dint of listening one succeeds in distinguishing the reports of the French guns from those of

the German; guessing the calibre of the pieces and localising the district in which the parts of the orchestra are most vigorous—Bezannes and Tinqueux. Eventually one is deafened, head in a whirl and heart beating wildly: then, suddenly, one falls asleep for a minute or a quarter of an hour, maybe, to wake up with a start to the unexpected roar of a battery which has changed ground.

From time to time one of us ascends to the first floor to peep through the slats of the venetian-blinds. A few yards from the house a German battery has taken up its position beside the canal. The guns are shorter than ours and of a lighter colour—yellower. The ammunition caissons stand open beside them, displaying their rows of shells; and the gunners stand waiting quietly in their rain-soaked cloaks. The horses have been unhitched and are hidden in the yards or under cover behind piles of boards and other materials. A travelling kitchen is busy to the rear of the battery, and behind it are some large waggons. The cooks, with rifles slung, and armed one with a knife another with a ladle, are preparing vegetables, tasting the stew, and singing the

while, apparently careless of anything but the rain, which may prejudice the boiling of their soup. Infantry sections, led by mounted officers in shining waterproofs, pass in good order, singing their songs; and continually the motor-cars of the helmeted, stern-faced commanders flash by, spattering everything with the water standing in the holes in the road.

Early in the afternoon, just as a gleam of sunshine shows itself between two showers, Madame X. ventures out into the courtyard, which Father Jude has entered in a state of alarm, as he doesn't know how the battle is going. She next opens the door on to the street. Nelly and I accompany her. On opening the door we are confronted by a tall non-commissioned infantry officer leaning up against the garden wall, near the men of his section. As soon as he sees us this fierce-looking Prussian shows a smile on his grey-red face and asks us in good enough French for some matches to light his cigar with. He is anxious to learn whether we are afraid of the guns: and we question him in our turn. This veteran knows no details of the fighting—or

won't tell us—and on our remarking that the fighting at the gates of Reims proves the imperial army to be in retreat, he replies with conviction that Germany may occasionally experience a check, but that there is no doubt as to the war ending favourably for her. All the Powers of the world joined together could not pull down his country, he says.

The fighting recommences more fiercely than ever. Now one can hear the crackling of machine-guns through the ever louder thunder of the cannon. The batteries are no longer exchanging compliments, they speak all at once, and mingle their voices and bellow in an infernal rough-and-tumble, as it were. Ensconced in a low chair, our good hostess has laid her knitting down; she is very flushed, her eyelids are lowered, and her hands are crossed on her knees. "My friends," she murmurs, "for the first time in my life, I believe, I don't feel confident." As she speaks, rhythmical steps ring on the road and songs are heard above the uproar of the artillery. I go to the first floor and thence can make out an infantry column pushing on

from the Fléchambault direction. My husband joins me, greatly excited. I look at him, and he answers my unspoken question: "These troops seem to be retreating, so the French are not far away."

About six o'clock we get a respite, and take advantage of it to have a look round outside. The battery opposite and its caissons and other appurtenances are making off at a hard gallop in the same direction as the infantry we watched just now. "Where are they off to in such a hurry?" we ask ourselves, as we regain our shelter. Scarcely have we put the question when a deafening noise, as of a thousand storms releasing all their thunder at once, echoes about us. It seems to us to come from just outside, from the courtyard. The report was so sudden and fierce that we flung ourselves into each other's arms, crying: "It is the street-fighting!" However, the uproar is shortlived, and at the end of a few minutes the guns are silent. It begins again farther away, but the sounds are rounded-off, discontinuous, and joyful, as it were. "Our men!" we think. The others can no longer reply. Our hearts, lately weighed down with anxiety,

now swell with hope, and a smile rises to our lips. We can hear the German army and its *matériel* retreating westwards rapidly through the torrential rain. It is now too dark to see what is happening in the street, but—we can hear. The troops' pace quickens.

At two a.m. they are still passing—now at a run, huskily gasping out their "Weicht! weicht!" Beside them gallop vehicles large and small, and mounted men. The rain rattles on helmets, vehicles and arms. At last all is quiet, and one can hear only the rain splashing on to the cobbles, roofs, materials by the Port and the plane trees in the street.

Sunday, September 13.

"Mother! Here we are!" It is hardly five when these words rise from the street in a young voice which is restrained as though it feared to rouse the sleepers. "Vive la France! Vive l'armée!" Clappings of hands; joyful shouts from the room on one side of us; and soon, from behind the shaken door of our own, the excited voice of Nelly: "Uncle! Aunt! The French! The French!"

Without delaying to dress, I rush into

Madame X.'s room—adjoining that of my niece. Both of them, in their nightdresses, are standing at the open window and, with eyes turned in the direction of the Port, welcoming the little *piou-piou* who just now greeted our friend so gaily as she was raising her blinds to scrutinise the silence outside. And here we all three are, laughing, weeping, hugging one another, choking with joy—and shivering, for the breeze is more than cool. Large clouds hover in the rain-washed sky like bosoms heaving with restrained sobs.

Our hostess makes violent signs to a trooper. She would like to fête and feast him! But smiling and without a word he shakes his head and shows that he has a mission to fulfil. He carries his rifle like a sportsman ready to fire at game, and hunts carefully round every pile of wood or bricks in the yard opposite. He is joined by another soldier — Goodness! how small and neat and fine they are, compared with the huge Prussians—who has just been having a look round the storage sheds, and the two of them disappear into one of the latter. A rifle-shot rings out, and is followed by a second and a third. The two French soldiers then re-

appear with a German prisoner walking between them.

The noise of the reports brings the people of the neighbourhood out of their houses. Remy, the watchman at the yards where the capture was effected, rushes off, and soon comes out of the shed with the news that a German has been killed in there. No doubt this German, instead of surrendering, fired his rifle at the two Frenchmen, who promptly made him pay with his life for resisting them. More soldiers arrive, and cautiously investigate the boats and cottages of the Port. Occasionally one hears another shot. Patrols of light cavalry and dragoons enter Reims by the Vesle bridge, their drenched, brightly-coloured uniforms showing vividly in the watery sunshine.

Six o'clock has come before I leave the house. The heavy rain of last night has washed the ground clean of the dirt due to the occupation, and the great plane leaves fallen in showers have tried to conceal the last traces of it. From the Rue Libergier I can see Notre-Dame through the bare branches, a little gloomy as a whole, but with its angles and relief showing clearly. It looks as though

wet with tears in its garment of ineffable purity. From the top of the north tower still floats the white flag run up by order of the invader. In the Parvis Square a huge motor char-à-banc has been abandoned by the enemy on the very platform of the Cathedral, hiding the great door. Some petrol cans, upturned chairs, ladders and tools lie around it. The torrents of rain have not succeeded in removing the signs of occupation nor the smell of Germans from the approaches to Paul Dubois' "Jeanne D'Arc." The wet straw has been raked together into broken rows, like seaweed on the shore after ebb tide, and rubbish of all kinds, fragments of equipment, harness and various utensils are mixed with it.

I enter the Cathedral by the northern side door, and note with surprise on my right some high linen hangings nailed to frames, separating the chancel from the nave and aisles. Chairs are stacked up against the rood screen. As on the day before the bombardment, Masses are being celebrated at all the altars, but few worshippers are present to-day. Some multicoloured splashes of light from the windows quiver on the flagstones.

The service over, I make for the Port *via* the Rue Libergier, which is still devoid of life, and bear away to the right with the object of reading the proclamation which was posted yesterday by the Germans. I have heard people talk about its brutal tone.[1]

After reading the poster I retrace my steps, boiling with indignation. On the Chaussée

[1] Here is a translation from the French, not quite so bad as that of most of the proclamations by the enemy. The italicised passage was italicised in the poster itself:

"Should a battle take place to-day or very soon afterwards in the outskirts of Reims or in the town itself, the inhabitants are warned that they must keep absolutely calm, and not attempt to take any part whatever in the fighting. They must not attempt to attack solitary soldiers nor detachments of the German army. It is hereby forbidden to raise barricades or injure the roads in a way that may impede movements of troops, or, in short, to do anything that may prejudice the German army.

"*To assure fully the safety of the troops and have a pledge for the orderly behaviour of the people of Reims, the persons named below have been taken as hostages by the General Command of the German army. These hostages will be hanged at the least sign of disorder. Also, the town will be burnt entirely or in part, and the inhabitants hanged, if the foregoing orders are transgressed in any way whatever.*

"On the other hand, if the town keeps quite quiet and orderly, the hostages and inhabitants will be placed under the protection of the German army.

"By order of the German authorities,

"DR. LANGLET, Mayor.

"REIMS, *December* 12, 1914."

[Here follows a list of hostages, containing eighty-one names.]

du Port I find myself caught between two assemblages, to which everybody is hurrying; one of them at the bottom of the Rue Payen, the other in the Rue du Jard. I make for the latter, and join it just as some hundred Germans, taken prisoner by a squad of French soldiers, fling down their caps, arms, haversacks, and bandoliers. They were found in the sheds belonging to a business house, and surrendered immediately. When they were rounded up they looked pitiful enough, but now that they have rid themselves of their accoutrements they at once cheer up and smile; and it is with the air of men relieved of a crushing weight that they march off at the word of command. The last four have hardly got into motion when inquisitive people begin scrambling for the trophies on the ground.

When I get home I find that Madame X., aided by Nelly, has set up a kind of bar at the dining-room window, and is pouring out liqueurs and wine for the patrols. Some of the soldiers take the drinks; but most would prefer coffee, bread, or anything else in the way of eatables. They say they haven't had any proper food since the fighting began seven

days ago, and have had to sustain themselves by eating fruit or raw vegetables found in the fields. We distribute among them all our bread, biscuits, chocolate, even sweets—in a word, everything our cupboards contain.

Nothing could look less like the first conquering army than does this its successor. The generous equipment and comfort of that which has just left Reims contrasts strongly with the destitution of this which put it to flight, nerved by a supernatural strength. The health and luxury so smugly displayed by that pack of haughty thieves bring out into pathetic relief the holy wretchedness of this army, which need not blush, which before Paris lately raised its Michael's sword and said to the enemy, "You shall not pass." Unshaven, emaciated, exhausted by weariness and privation, in torn and shabby uniforms, the victors of to-day do not wish to impress us. Yet with what delight and rejoicing are they welcomed!

When the regiments from Franchet d'Espérey enter the town *en masse* between eleven o'clock and noon, the whole populace goes out to meet them. The women smother them with flowers,

and give them wine, cakes and all kinds of delicacies. It is impossible to describe the intensity of the joy which spreads to every heart with the speed of an electric wave. The bells ring wildly. We cheer the officers and soldiers, grip their hands, embrace them; we would carry them shoulder-high were they not so many. We turn pale with sheer joy, laugh, weep, shout, and give anything we possess—for give we must. Men empty their pockets of money and everything else, and offer the contents to their welcome friends. And so the town of Reims, which the fugitives of yesterday thought they had bled white, still can discover something good to bestow on the sons of France.

At noon Pierre, who went out by himself into the town this morning, tells us a strange story about a young priest who was carried away as hostage last night. After returning to Reims, he ascended to the top of the north tower of the Cathedral to substitute the tricolour for the white flag, and, to his great surprise, found up there some cans of petroleum.

We prolong the meal by a lively exchange

of impressions. Some soldiers come in asking for bread, and are made free of that on the table. We offer them champagne and coffee. They are Parisians, and answer freely our inquiries about the fighting. From their rambling and imperfect accounts we pick out the names of Montmirail, Sézanne, Esternay, Sommesous, Saint-Gond. They try to describe the encounters, and how the Germans were routed, smothered, and bogged in the swamps. Of the strategic operations which enabled the French army that had retreated from Charleroi to resume the offensive they are absolutely ignorant. These soldiers, who two months ago were clerks or officials, seem to me—to judge by their attitude towards the work done to-day—to have detached themselves from the cares and concerns of ordinary life in order to share that dream of the ideal which slumbered somewhere in the depths of the French conscience and race. My husband cross-questions them on the point. They do not merely admit that this is so in their own case, but go on to show us that most of their fellows have, like them, been revived and lifted towards a religion of the supernatural, based on a number

of facts which, by their wonderful coincidence, led to this unexpected victory.[1]

In the afternoon the French artillery drew up in rows along the pavements exactly where the German guns stood yesterday morning. The artillerymen, dead-beat, sleep or talk, hunched up on their seats or sitting on the kerb or shop steps. But none of them looks a bit down-hearted: very much the reverse. Here and there I catch fragments of sentences: "We had gone back quite far enough. . . . It was about time to make us advance. . . . If our leaders had continued the retreat, I believe we would have bolted." Under the bountifully beflagged windows the limbers and guns are smothered in flowers; the street is strewn with them as formerly on Corpus Christi Day; and

[1] It is possible that the German army got close enough to Paris for its General Staff to be able to see through powerful binoculars the white towers and domes of Montmartre; and it is equally possible that the Staff, confident as it was in its plan of operations and the strength of its army, was rendered anxious by what it saw and hesitated at the very moment when one of the French army leaders had the inspiration of flinging himself on the enemy without waiting for the delay which our High Command had foreseen. We may also note the extraordinarily timely occurrence of torrential rain, which converted the Saint-Gond marshes into a sepulchre for the Prussian Guard that had just crossed it dry-foot.

the horses wear them on their ear-caps, their battered saddles and harness held together by bits of string. These poor beasts, thin as skeletons, are covered with wounds and have horrible ulcers on their hoofs. Poor animals! their hunger is so great that, after devouring the small oat ration in their nosebags, they scrape with their feet the dung dropped by their predecessors and eat the undigested grains found in it. In the middle of the road, between the two rows of guns, rides a colonel followed by an orderly almost hidden by flowers. A stern-faced officer—in command of the battery, I believe—disappears into a shop, comes out with a chair, and sits down near a gun. He looks very bad. His head is rested on arms folded on his knees.

Just as I reach Notre-Dame on foot, the noise of a bursting shell pulls me up sharply. Passers-by tell me that it comes from the German batteries which are covering the retreat, and that there is nothing to be alarmed about.

The Cathedral, or at least the part of it open to the public, is filled with worshippers. To-day in the chancel is being celebrated the Nativity

of the Virgin Mary. The office, telling of joy and victory, has begun. The servers are mostly humble folk. Some people are in the seats of the Cardinal's Chapel, others stand and walk about on the muddy flagstones in the transept and the Virgin's Chapel. All unite their voices with those of the choristers intoning the Gregorian chant. The first-comers are kneeling on the steps and even against the chancel screen. Behind them the standing crowd becomes thicker and thicker. There is a constant influx of soldiers, knapsack on back, rifle in hand—dirty, ragged, dreadful-looking, sublime soldiers. Their ravaged faces betray their sufferings; visions of slaughter still haunt their eyes. We draw aside respectfully so that they may approach the altar. Every one of us would like to tell them how we love them, that we pray for them, and that, friends and strangers alike, all are embraced in the infinite tenderness and gratitude we feel towards them. They remain motionless for some minutes, leaning on their rifles, their backs bent by the weight of the knapsack, their eyes riveted on the lighted tabernacle. They cross themselves and withdraw.

Some officers come in too—some young, some old. They look as tired as the men, and care ravages their drawn faces. When they uncover you see that their foreheads are lighter above where the képi brim touches, and that their pale brows are cris-crossed with wrinkles.

Are they praying? I should like to be able to read their souls. But their presence in this place—soldiers and officers alike—here among these sacred stones raised to the glory of Her "whose virgin heel crushed the serpent's head"—is it not the sincerest and most efficacious of supplications? Are not they also, and more than any people now, the living stones of this architectural song of praise—love, devotion, self-denial, sacrifice? Does not the silent moment of one of these living oblations, made in the image of the perfect Sacrifice, equal, nay surpass, in value the homage of a whole city on its knees?

Suddenly, "*Comme un coup de fusil, après les vêpres*," the *Magnificat* bursts forth. The congregation take up the versicles heart and soul. This is joy welling from the heart: "*He hath shewed the strength of His arm, He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their*

hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek." And now a short, bent infantryman, preceded by a verger, passes towards the southern sacristy, mounts the chancel steps, and walks up the chancel to the very foot of the high altar. He is muddy and wretched-looking beyond description, bent down by his equipment and by a yet heavier load of sorrow or humility. All that one sees of his head, bowed on his breast, is a yellow mop; his shoulders shake as if he wept. He moves quickly, and in the middle of the chancel the soldier suddenly faces the tabernacle, while the sacristan bends the knee to the Holy Sacrament, and with head still bowed he slips his rifle from his shoulder and raises both hands in the attitude of oblation.

"*Salve Regina, mater misericordiæ, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus. . . .*" The last anthem is being sung when a terrific detonation shakes the vaults and makes the congregation start. Yet not a person leaves. We are awaiting the *Te Deum.*

Ah! that *Te Deum*, sung to the sound of shells; that chant of gracious acts, punctuated

at regular intervals by vile explosions! Ah! the stupor of the crowd, the choristers' voices quickening time and beginning to quaver, the triumphant *Te Deum* changing into sobs! "Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us," quavers the choir at last amid a deafening thunder. And, as soon as the last verse has died away, a verse of hope and confidence, the *Tantum ergo* throws the congregation on its knees. "*May the old law give place to the new rite!*" Boom! Boom! Boom! protests the science-born bellowing of human violence. Now it is the last blessing, the last elevation of the monstrance. Foreheads touch the pavement, the sound of the bell rings out and dies away amid the ominous echoes of the bombardment. Then the worshippers crowd towards the exit, while the Catholic Church, overcoming the passions of this world—it knows neither fear, nor death, nor the agony of dread—persists in its liturgy, accompanied by the organ: "Nations, praise God with joy." And so ends, in accordance with its original rites, the feast of Her who is blessed above all women.

Being driven by the jostling congregation

against the linen screens which shut off the nave, I peep through the openings and see that the floor is covered with straw. On asking people near me the reason of this, I am told that the straw was laid down during the fighting of yesterday, by order of the German authorities, as beds for the wounded who would be brought here. I have not left the Cathedral when I know, or think I know, the origin of the bombardment which interfered so inopportunely in the ceremony. Shells are being fired, so one person tells another, on the Cérès and Laon suburbs, where the French artillery is bringing its guns into action. One imagines and repeats that everything is going well, and that what one hears is the last gasp of the dying monster. This makes me change my mind, and I remain in the Cathedral.

Though the crowd has gone, the clergy remain. They have merely entered the sacristies to lay aside their sacerdotal robes. One by one the prelates of the Chapter return to the chancel, wearing their long episcopal hoods, and arrange themselves in order of precedence; the oldest, all grey-headed, are nearest the altar. A canon, kneeling before the tabernacle,

begins the service; the others, in the stalls, gravely make the responses, accompanied by the voices of the few worshippers still there. The splendid lamp is extinguished, and only two great Paschal candles and the night lights shine as stars among the shadows of the sanctuary. Like the rhythmical and monotonous tinkling of a stream, the prayers of praise and supplication follow one another—the Catholic soul going out to the Virgin, with the cannonade as its terrible accompaniment. But nothing could interrupt nor even quicken the recital. The hour of death may strike, but what a privilege and blessedness to meet it in this house of God, whither Our Lady will surely come to take to herself the souls of the poor sinners calling on her name. When the last *Ave* has died away the oldest of the canons rises and in his quavering voice gives out that he will recite the *De profundis* for the dead. His tremulous yet even words remind me of the multitude that has gone down into the pit since the sin of our first ancestor, since knowledge brought sorrow to the birth. I think of those whom we have known and loved; of those, our brethren in Christ, who lately, yesterday,

died for us and perchance were sons of guilty men, ransomed by them; of those whom we have never known and from whom we trace our descent through the mists of time; of those who have prayed here in this very place, in days of joy and in days of sadness, when the bells peeled out the baptism and the sacring of the kings, or sounded the tocsin of disaster. And I reflect that never since the Flood has there ever been a catastrophe to equal that which is depopulating the world to-day. . . . My thoughts are interrupted by the angels of the chancel clock striking four. I must be going.

In the Rue de Vesle, where the artillery is still drawn up, I see the commander still sitting in his chair, in the same place, in the same posture. Is he asleep? or is he thinking? What despair, what nightmare crushes this man? Passers-by turn interested eyes towards him. One would like to comfort and help him, but no one would dare to trespass on his loneliness.

I meet Nelly and her little girl near the bridge. My niece is anxious to see the troops, which include, she believes, some companies of her husband's regiment. So we return slowly

to the Place Royale, meaning to go no farther. But Hélène falls down on the pavement and at once begins to cry, and this compels us to get back home by way of Rue Libergier, now perfectly quiet. The firing, mingled with the crackling of machine-guns, grows so furious that I imagine fighting to be in progress in the streets. A lady appears at her window, and, to get a shelter rather than information, I run towards her and ask if she knows what is going on. . . . We then continue on our way, I feeling very anxious. In the Chaussée du Port Nelly draws my attention to five or six aeroplanes soaring at so great a height that the eyes have to focus themselves properly before they become visible. White balls and grey balls surround the aeroplanes now and then and remain hanging under the clouds like great powder-puffs from which the powder is escaping.

Monday, September 14.

Bent over a road map, we take as the basis of our calculations the distance travelled by the French army in the last week, and reckon how long it will be before Vouziers is freed. For at the moment we can't see any

reason why the German retreat should stop. According to our figures, Nelly and her little girl should be able to get back to Roche in five or six days' time.

These calculations are approved by our hostess, who has been exultant ever since Reims was recaptured. . . . Boom! Bang! Bang! Bang! Crash! break in the shells with a violence that recalls the bombardment of September 4. "Well, well!" says our friend. "Good luck to our gunners! It's the end of the fighting." The scared servant, who can no longer endure being alone in the kitchen, rushes into the dining-room to take shelter under our wing. Shells fall in showers, now nearer, now farther away. Pierre and I are dismayed by thoughts of a counter-attack by the Germans entrenched in the forts, and fear that the French army has been crushed, and that Reims is once again under the enemy's jackboot. This time we shall be horribly treated, no doubt of it. "Away with your fears!" says our kind hostess. "What you hear is our men routing that horrible brood out of the forts it took refuge in. It won't be long before it takes to its heels and foots it in front of our soldiers."

And the shells continue to fall on the town till eleven o'clock.

Terron and Remy come in and tell us that the Town Hall, the headquarters of a French Staff, received particular attention this morning. The municipal buildings have not been injured, barring a few broken windows and chipped stones; but a Staff colonel was killed in the square, and some civilians and soldiers wounded mortally or severely. Some houses were destroyed in the streets round the Town Hall, and as much material damage done as on September 4.

The citizens are impelled by curiosity to go out after lunch to behold with their own eyes the effects of this new bombardment. So is my husband, though he makes us promise not to leave the house. Hardly has he gone when some leading people of the neighbourhood come in with the triumphant news that the danger is over, the forts recaptured, and the Germans in flight. They add that the British are coming in. Madame X. has to call on one of her tenants who was slightly wounded the other day, and asks Nelly and me to go with her. So much are we assured by what these

gentlemen have told us that we gladly consent, and take little Hélène with us.

The people we go to visit are well-to-do business people whom fear of the Germans led to leave Reims in their motor-car a month ago. Ever since the beginning of the battle of the Marne they have driven in the track of the French army. They returned this morning, and express themselves as very well satisfied with their little excursion. They have had a good view of the battlefields, and seen ditches filled with fallen soldiers, shocks of oats behind every one of which a sharpshooter was on his knees for ever. But they passed along quickly, being specially concerned with finding agreeable quarters in the inns. So that their memory is but slightly haunted by what they saw of the war and on the roads. Our friend drags us from the shop kept by these tourists to another of her properties, then to a third, a fourth, and a fifth, all standing almost untouched among houses which have been seriously damaged. A layer of straw in front of the Town Hall hides the pool of blood from some horses blown to pieces there by a shell.

The air is oppressive and the sun sultry.

The bombardment has begun again, but the wind is blowing from us and deadens the noise of the guns.

After stopping at many places, we find ourselves at about four o'clock in the Place Royale, the centre for public meetings. We are full of conjectures as to the evacuation of the forts; but I am so worn out and so anxious to return home that I pay no heed to the discussions which prove so absorbingly interesting to my companions. Here, in this square, the buildings round which hummed but lately with the commercial luxury of the city, which is now ravaged, smashed, ruined, held by batteries of tragically quiet guns, I feel a presentiment of inevitable disaster, greater than that which has already overtaken us, brooding over the town, its citizens, myself, and ready at any moment to burst on us.

I manage to find my way back somehow with my nieces and Madame X. to the Rue Cérès, which is barred by a rope and guarded by two sentries and some cavalry. In spite of our entreaties, Madame X. takes it upon herself to lift the rope to pass the barrier. One of the sentries blocks the way and holds his

bayonet across her. When our friend exclaims and asks an explanation of this, one of the mounted men points at the suburb and jerks out: "There's a bombardment going on yonder!" I thereupon tell my companions that I feel cold, and, leaving them behind, make my way quickly back to the Chaussée du Port. Pierre is awaiting me impatiently at the house, which has been visited by the police with orders not to let any light be visible outside. Evidently Reims must be prepared for all emergencies, whatever her leading men may say.

Tuesday, September 15.

The morning is grey and gloomy. I have been in search of provisions, which are now almost unobtainable. A shopkeeper in the Rue de Vesle tells me in confidence that on Sunday evening an officer whom she had congratulated on the French army's return to Reims replied: "Yes, from a military standpoint you may well be pleased; but I can assure you that our presence here is a great misfortune for the town and you inhabitants." Some explosions in the fog afford me a practical illustration of the enemy's implacable purpose.

On returning home I find our hostess busy with some needlework, and Nelly sewing at her side. Pierre has gone out. Madame X. often stops to open the window overlooking the street and talk with passers-by. Yet she is so diligent that her sewing progresses quickly and well. I myself try to do some work, and join in the conversation, but my shaking fingers cannot follow the outline on the cambric, and when I want to speak the words die away between my chattering teeth. One after another, methodically, deliberately, fall the shells ; and I expect every moment to see the mangled corpse of my husband brought in on a stretcher.

Noon ! God be praised ! Pierre arrives safe and sound, but nervous and anxious. During lunch Madame X. and he begin to talk about the happenings round Reims. She, relying on what the big-wigs said, will have it that to-day is the last day of the bombardment. He, logically minded and map in hand, shows that the enemy holds some very advantageous positions in the forts and on the high ground, and knows how to use them and abandon them in good time. As though in

confirmation of his assertions, news is brought us that people living in the Quartier Cérès—the victims among them are becoming more numerous—have been asked by the military authorities to retreat towards the south-west into the Faubourg de Paris, which is less exposed and has not yet been struck. Neighbour Remy himself thought it advisable to take himself off with his family to the Clairmarais plots, and wait there till the torture inflicted on the town ceases or diminishes.

We hear the noise of quarrelling in the kitchen, and almost immediately afterwards there appears in the dining-room a queer personage with a sidelong and skipping gait, thin legs, a head like a faun, pointed ears, a goat-like nose, and a wandering look in his deep-set eyes. Grinning and merry in his blue gardener's apron, he advances, his arms filled with a huge posy of flowers and bunches of grapes, which he lays at my friend's feet. My husband nicknames him the Satyr; actually he answers to the name of Sylvain. After putting down the flowers he tells us, in voluble, jerky, incoherent language, interspersed with comparisons and terms as quaint as his appear-

ance, and quite in harmony with it, all that has happened in the Quartier Cérès where he lives—fires, the falling-in of houses, deaths, wounds, burials, requisitions, evacuations, etc. All I can remember of his talk is that to the French Command's knowledge the Germans have carried off with them to Brimont fort two hundred prisoners, and that their presence there protects the fort from our artillery. As soon as he has done speaking, and without awaiting an answer or a question, he vanishes, quickly as Pan himself, into the garden. "Hi! Sylvain, Sylvain!" calls our hostess. "Wait a bit; I've some work for you." She steps across the purple begonias and sunflowers lying on the carpet and tries to overtake her gardener. Will she catch him? Yes! for his stentorian voice is heard again in the offing.

In the afternoon my husband takes Hélène, Nelly, and me into the Avenue de Paris, in the Haubette direction. We don't dare to go very far in these parts. The suburb is dirty and ugly, and the weather cold. Yet we have a look at the houses burnt by the Germans two days before they left, and now with only their calcined walls rising towards the heavens.

Here and there are bodies of troops. Bursts of incongruous merriment proceed from shabby dwellings. Women and children are standing in a queue at the closed doors of a bakery; the cabarets are packed with civilians who neither drink nor smoke—as there is no drink or tobacco, nor food either—but content themselves with lively conversation.

On our return we find Madame X. very busy cleaning and putting back in their places the precious belongings which she hid in the cellar a fortnight ago. Sylvain has carried up the boxes during our absence, and our friend, helped by her maid, is emptying them, not in the least disturbed by the shower of shells falling on the town. A ray of the setting sun, piercing the roseate clouds, finds a way into the room and seems to smile on the scene.

Dinner over, some neighbours knock on the shutters and whisper to us to look outside. The night is pitch dark and the town wrapped in obscurity. They point to the north and east, which are a huge furnace. We are now in the road, and a passing infantry patrol civilly asks the groups of talkers to get indoors, and advises us to extinguish all fires and cut

off the lighting mains. It then disappears into the night without answering our questions.

Ought we to go to bed? Close to this house are wooden stores and open yards filled with deal boards. Were a shell to fall on them, even a splinter or spark touch them, the flames would spread so rapidly that no assistance could possibly confine them, and we should be surrounded. This might well happen during the night, and nobody in the house would become aware of it in time. Our hostess risks the danger and sleeps peacefully; the servant slumbers; Nelly and Hélène rest their heads against us to feel reassured. But —a fire would mean suffocation, the stake, a horrible death for us all! I shall not lie down before two or three a.m.; till then my husband, his mind relieved by my being awake, will rest, and afterwards he will replace me while I take my turn of repose.

Wednesday, September 16.

We go downstairs at about eight o'clock, heads aching and cheeks drawn. During breakfast we again discuss the subject of the forts holding out. Our good hostess persists,

on the strength of some rumours, that a British naval gun will try conclusions with them to-day. As a matter of fact, nobody knows anything. Food is becoming scarcer and scarcer, and the farms on the southern outskirts of the town which the Germans did not pillage are now our only source of supplies.

The shells have not waited for eight o'clock to begin falling on the city. With clock-like regularity they burst more or less close to us every ten minutes. Now come four terrifying explosions, shorter intervals apart. Pierre, who was somewhere near at hand, returns and orders Nelly and me to get ready quickly to seek shelter in the fields beyond reach of the guns, as other people are doing.

While we dress Hélène we are told that the shells which just made such a din fell in the Square of Saint-Pierre, in the Rue Chabaud, and in other adjacent streets, killing and wounding many people. The inhabitants of the centre of the town pass in crowds, carrying provisions with them, and looking like people who have spent the night on their feet. Clad in wraps and handkerchiefs, they steer southwards; and we follow them.

After passing through the Paris gate and the avenue of the same name, I stop not far from the Muire bridge, hypnotised by reading the direction plate referring to the two roads to Paris—that *via* Soissons on the right, that *via* Dormans on the left. We may not take the Soissons road to-day, as it is guarded by the military, so we take the other. Here below us is a burnt farm, with only a barn and some blackened walls left. In front of us and on both sides of the gently-rising road is open country and a peaceful stretch of fields, vineyards, and woods.

We visit with interest the trenches in which the Germans defended themselves last Saturday. They are like ditches a yard wide and almost two yards deep, almost entirely covered by boards, doors, shutters, even furniture, on the top of which were piled tufts of grass and beetroots—the better to hide them. In the mud and water at the bottom of these trenches lay a quantity of heterogeneous objects—chairs and, most common of all, empty bottles. When we were but a few feet from these military works we recognised that their positions had been selected skilfully; the French soldiers

advancing on Reims could not see them until they were right on the top of them. People point out to us on the horizon Forts Montbré and Pompelle, recaptured from the Germans. To our left is the village of Meneux, whence Reims was bombarded on September 4.

We retrace our steps. All along the road, behind the burnt farm and the tea-garden at the Muire bridge, in the drinking-shops and inns of the Avenue de Paris, in private houses, on the avenue seats, and on the kerb the sad-looking pilgrims of the morning have opened their provision baskets and are taking a meal accompanied by the diminishing noise of the guns.

We should be glad of a short rest when we get home; but the bombardment makes us hurry through our lunch and get away again quickly, still without our hostess, who, heroic soul, obstinately refuses to leave her house and won't take any notice of our fears. Just outside the house we encounter the Remy family—father, mother, and four children—bound, like ourselves, for a safe place. We tramp along together. While we are crossing the canal by a footbridge at the end of the

port, we notice an infantry captain who has stopped and, with folded arms, is looking towards the Rue Libergier, anxiety and bitterness written on his face. We ask him how far we ought to go to be out of shell range. He stares at the group of us in a way which I can't describe, and mutters, pointing southwards: "Three or four kilometres in that direction." After crossing the canal, Remy, our guide, leads us through semi-country lanes in the Faubourg Sainte-Anne to La Haubette.

The La Haubette gate on the public promenade is closed. So we have to work round its tiresome boundary walls and mount a steep, long, houseless street which ends in the fields. Far behind us shells are bursting pitilessly; thick clouds rise here and there, and the wind, which has risen a little, wafts the smell of fires to our noses. We reach the edge of a huge basin-like stubble-field, opposite which is a vineyard, and pass along a hedge at the side of the steep-banked railway from Epernay. This is where we will stop. "From this elevation," says Remy, "you can see the forts; and we shall be able to watch the fighting."

From the bank on the edge of the vineyard

one commands the whole of Reims and an extremely extensive view beyond it. The splendid nave of the Cathedral and its towers, all rosy-red in the autumn sun, dominate the city, rise far above it, hover over it. Right and left of the pile and behind it fires are blazing; the glorious edifice, standing out against a background of variously coloured smoke, appears invulnerable. The conflagration to the right of it is so furious that at every instant mighty sheaves of flames pierce the smoke, writhe, tower upwards, and bend over as if they wish to devour the whole town. Shells are still raining on the city. You can see quite clearly the flash as they leave the gun, their flight through the air, and where they strike and raise a dirty black cloud of smoke. The noise of the burst does not reach us till some time afterwards, mingled with that of falling houses. At every shot one asks oneself sadly: "Did that kill anybody? How many homes has it wrecked? How many people has it made desolate?" You can conjure up the cries of the wounded, the trickling blood, the horribly mutilated bodies. . . . Remy names in turn the places from which these

accursed engines of destruction are fired. Below, on the left, is Brimont fort, and next to it from left to right those of Fresnes, Vitry and Nogent. The villages seen near the fort bear the same names respectively. That of Brimont is ablaze; so are the others. On the slopes between Vitry and Nogent-l'Abbesse are the Cernay and Berru woods, from which at short intervals rise the transient puffs of smoke from batteries in action.

What we can see is really the battle, the artillery battle. We do not see armies advancing, firing, charging, and engaging in straight lines, as engravings represent them; nor the famous squares, nor generals' waving plumes. The field of action is an absolute desert. Here and there, and especially in places where there is a fold in the ground, puffs of white or grey smoke rise and disperse; and one hears the now familiar roar of the guns—but that is all. Yet, thanks to this apparent nothingness, hundreds of our kin—and others—are being cut to pieces by steel. And something is happening in the sky as well. A swarm of aeroplanes is manœuvring to the roar of engines, gliding, swooping, cruising at a moderate height.

Their varied hummings coalesce into a harmony like that of concerted organs and distant bells. From where we stand they seem to be just above the stubble, yet they cannot be so, and in truth are reconnoitring the positions of the armies. Continuously, differently coloured fires and smokes surround the planes. Are they signals or shrapnel? Sometimes one of the great birds swoops slowly round right overhead, and we feel ourselves under observation. The children then indulge in the game of running to hide themselves in the briers of the tall hedge that fences off the railway. We elders note the black iron crosses on the underside of the wings and fish-like tail of the monster, while we instinctively get away from a point exactly below its flight. It hovers a minute or so and then makes off.

The bombardment seems to die down at six o'clock. The dew has fallen, and it is cold. To reach the town by a short cut we go down into the hollow stubble-field, and when we reach the bottom of it terrifying shell explosions send us back post-haste to our original positions. Dusk is on us; night is closing in. More fires blaze up, while, yonder, the artillery duel con-

tinues. Amid the red, yellow and violet flashes on the horizon the Brimont furnace stands out like the maw of hell itself.

It is quite dark when we thread again the lanes of the Faubourg Sainte-Anne, in rear of the crowd. Citizens standing at their doors tell the passers-by, in whispers, of houses gutted during the day; of people killed and wounded. As we pass through the row of poplars along the canal we see some engineers climbing among the branches of the trees, with rolls of wire round their bodies. Are they engaged on putting them up, or on preparations for departure? We ask them, but they return no answer.

When we reach the house, Madame X., whose confidence is still unshaken, assures us that Brimont has been captured and that there will be no more shells to fear.

Thursday, September 17.

What an awful night we have had of it! The firing on the north raged ceaselessly, and every half-hour shells fell with a dull roar on the town. The room in which I kept vigil was as dark as the interior of a tomb. From my

chair I could see the woodyards between the slats of the blind, and I feared to see them catch fire any moment. There was not any sound in the street but the tramp of a silent patrol once an hour, and the gentle rustling of the plane leaves in the wind. One felt deserted, absolutely cut off from the world. Pierre was asleep, and my heart and temples throbbed so that they seemed to have left my body and be wandering about the room and sounding the general alarm as they struck corners of the furniture. I tried to collect my thoughts: impossible. I tried to pray: in vain. Then a mundane preoccupation seized me: Am I ready to flee? have I got on me everything that simply must be taken? If a fire breaks out, how shall I manage to get all our party away safely? My mouth turned dry and bitter, my throat seemed to choke. Sometimes I told myself that I was asleep and dreaming an evil dream, that the war was an imagination, and that I should wake up in my bed at Roche or Paris. But the sights of the previous day soon came crowding back upon me; and the heavy fall of the shells brought again before my eyes the battle, the fires, the aeroplanes, and the ruin, suffering,

terror and slaughter due to them. Would these horrors continue to-morrow—for ever? I myself felt convinced that Reims was not freed; that the scourge was not yet checked; that the executioner had not yet lost his courage. Could it be that to the ancient royal city would fall the honour of atoning for some of the world's trespasses? That her holy ones by their merits had won for her the great favour of dying for herself and for others? Must she be smitten in her noblest and loveliest possession? Would Our Lady allow her sanctuary to be violated and destroyed? No! such a disaster would surpass all sorrow that could be imagined; the very thought of it was unbearable. Should it come to pass, it would indeed be the end of the world, the coming of the Last Judgment of which the Evangelist writes, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, the dismay of nations, men's hearts failing them for fear, the powers of the heaven shaken. Of course, the final cataclysm must come some day. The signs heralding it seem to multiply, so would it not be wise and comforting to face the matter with calm confidence? God is just, but merciful: blessed be His name! Happy,

too, is he among us who shall endure the most, for he is richest in the Communion of Saints. As for the assailant, the executioner, what Christian who has placed himself unreservedly in the hands of Providence would dare to judge him? Alas! it is hard for one who feels life strong in him and sees himself in peril of death to force himself to serenity of mind. In the face of danger the healthy body wars against the soul. I cannot resign myself to death. I love my life and the lives of those who are with me here in the house. And that is why, when all is balanced up, I succumb to the desire to leave Reims, now too closely beset by death.

A clock in the room was striking three when, as though to hail the dawn not yet appeared, a salvo of shell struck the town. This rouses the house and brings everybody to his feet. Questions fly to and fro, and we descend the staircase. I can hear the servant crying with fright. Pierre, harassed and preoccupied, dresses without saying a word, while I, unable to resist a peculiar sleepiness which suddenly overcomes me, stretch myself on my bed and soon am wrapped in deep slumber.

About five, my husband gently rouses me.

"Come," says he, "we must be off!" "Where to?" "Into the country, like we did yesterday." Shells keep falling. I hear the sound of moving feet in the street, and ask what it means; and am told that the people living in the north-east of the town have been evacuated since four o'clock, and are leaving the place. As I haven't had my clothes off for three days, I am soon ready. It is cold, so we put on all the garments we possess; and then, without having eaten anything, we wander away in the track of the others.

The people of the central parts of the town have joined those from Cérès; and those of the Port contribute their contingent to the mournful procession. Remy and his family started just before us. We catch up Terron and his folk, who walk slowly because the old watchman's daughter is on the eve of being confined. They tell us that shells have hit a hospital, and that the nurses and the wounded in the beds were killed by the explosions. Almost all the houses of the northern suburbs have been struck.

This morning the fog is low-lying, thick, and freezingly cold, and clings to the face like a

winding-sheet. It would not do my husband any good to cross the water by the Port foot-bridge, as it is too damp under the poplar trees. So we make for the Vesle bridge. As we pass the end of Rue Libergier I turn my eyes to the Cathedral. Only the front is visible; the large crucifix of the northern porch stretches out its arms towards the fugitives; the rest is veiled in mist. Dragoons are guarding both ends of the Vesle bridge: those at the city end urging on the exodus; those at the other preventing return till six in the evening.

The Avenue de Paris is swarming with people. Besides the crowd of civilians, there are infantry and mounted troops. Army waggons and motor-cars drive along. On we tramp through sticky mud, rotten leaves and horse-dung, under a grey and threatening sky. With the noise of the heavy vehicles are mingled the wailings of hungry, sleepy children, the cries of suffering women. But this confusion is dominated by the deafening roar of the bombardment. One does not know what to do; we are miserably undecided. We move but slowly, and then only because it is too cold to stand still. All the cafés, inns,

and bars are full. For fear of being overwhelmed, the owners of these places have closed the doors and removed the handles outside. All the shops have their shutters drawn; and at the bakers' shops, also shut, hundreds of people are standing in queues. I join one of these queues, determined to get something. Every three minutes the door opens a little, and five purchasers are allowed to enter. They are given only one loaf apiece and have to pass out through the back shop.

At nine o'clock we manage to slip into a kind of stall, the holder of which has started the sale of coffee. Seated on benches, we try to warm ourselves by drinking a blackish liquid. We should like to prolong our stay, but are soon compelled to make room for others and continue our journey. Little Hélène, peevish and tired, has to be carried by us in turn.

Near Pargny, on the Paris road *via* Château-Thierry, where the army is not needed, fugitives also swarm. Tired groups sit close together on heaps of stones, in ditches, on banks, behind stooks, and kill time by talking, eating and drinking. In the centre of one of these

groups a middle-aged, bare-headed working woman is holding forth at length. She is not cross; she does not speak angrily or even seriously of the events of the bombardment. Is she then trying to distract and cheer up the frightened flock around her? or is she quite unaware of what is happening? I cannot say. After a minute has passed we gather from her remarks that she is a Parisian living in the Rue Mouffetard, and that she came for a holiday in August to stay with her sister in the Quartier Cérès, where she was caught by the invasion. With a verve and in tones the truculent humour of which cannot possibly be described in words, she inveighs against the Boches, the war, the bombardment, Reims and her family. She maintains that she isn't afraid of shells, and is disgusted with this emigrating from the town every day; swears that Paris is the only good thing on earth; and ends by saying that she is off thither just as she is, without hat, valise, or money. And forthwith she springs into the road waving her arms and crying: "Who loves me, let him follow!" She obtains a *succès de gaieté*, but nobody follows her. Yet unwittingly this

woman has definitely made up one person's mind: mine. "She is right," I tell my husband. "We must start for Paris without any further delay."

In the meantime the fog has changed to rain. We retrace our steps, and close to the signpost meet a tilted cart, drawn by a screw of a horse, coming along the road. The cart is crammed with women and muffled-up children, and is the first civilian vehicle we have seen in these parts. I get out from under the umbrella shared with Nelly and Hélène, and go up to the cart. "Where are you off to?" I ask the woman driving it. She tells me some country name which I don't quite catch. I ask again: "Can one then go that way?" The woman makes signs with her shoulders and head which I take to mean: "We don't know, but we are going to try it." Why shouldn't we do the same as these travellers? The meeting has quickened my wish to go, and I plague Pierre to persuade him to give in to my pleadings.

While we are discussing the matter we approach the burnt farm, where many people are taking cover. Our curiosity is aroused by

a sham cannon in the courtyard, which was placed there six days ago by the Germans, and after the recapture of Reims drew French shells on to the farm. The people of the farm did not leave while the fighting was in progress, but, hidden in their cellar, were present at the burning down of their home. For the time being these poor people have to live in a shelter constructed by them with boards, so they cannot offer people hospitality. They confine themselves to distributing water from the well among the thirsty, and direct newcomers to the barn, the only building left untouched among the ruins. We go inside.

A depressing atmosphere pervades the place. On the straw-covered barn floor, on piles of sheaves and hay, men, women and children are jumbled together, sitting, lying, or huddled up. Here we find Madame Terron and her daughter, greatly upset because Terron, who went back home to fetch something to eat, does not return. They fear that something has happened to him. The barn door stands open and the wind howls and blows hard, driving the rain before it. But louder still are the noises of the bombardment, which

here have a peculiarly sonorous echo. We expect every minute that a shell will come and bring this wretched shelter about our ears. The rain becomes heavier than ever, and leaks through in all directions. Groups huddle together in a frightened promiscuousness —shivering wrecks of humanity, who are powdered over with straw rubbish and try to bury themselves in the fodder like dogs in kennels. Time goes by, and still Terron does not return. The young woman groans every now and then, as if she were about to be delivered. A nameless agony grips soul and body in this place, haunted by fear, cold and damp, where the senses are revolted by sickening odours. To what risks of a relapse is Pierre exposed! In my aching brain a stylus engraves these words: "Leave Reims"; and like a petulant child I keep saying to my husband: "We must leave Reims—at once." We go back to the road. It is past midnight.

In the Avenue de Paris we cannot find a single shop open at which provisions are sold. We try to re-enter Reims, disregarding the detonations of shells. At the Vesle bridge a dragoon with drawn sabre bars the way, so we

turn back. The rain falls incessantly. And now we see a howling mob following a patrol dragging a couple of spies in the direction of La Haubette. We are ill with fatigue, cold and hunger. My husband has the idea of going round to the back of a shut restaurant and entering through an inner court. The ruse succeeds—but only partially, as there is nothing eatable left in the restaurant. So we have to be satisfied with half a bottle of champagne among the four of us, and a cup of coffee each. After spending an hour in this horrible place, wherein at least the air one breathes is warm, we are asked by the proprietress to make room for others.

So we tramp along again through the icy slush. We have just taken shelter from the rain in a doorway when a shoemaker's wife has pity on us and makes us come into her glass-roofed kitchen, which already contains several people. Among these is a lady from the central part of Reims, who negotiates with the obliging proprietress for the use of a room for the period of the bombardment.

We leave our shelter as night draws on. The sky is now clearing; in the west

its white depths are shot with streaks of green and red.

Night has fallen when we re-enter Reims and reach the Chaussée du Port. I advise our hostess of our intention to leave on the morrow, and offer to take her with us. She refuses, as she assures us that she sees no reason for going, and is firmly convinced that every day will be the last of the bombardment.[1] We pack our bags; yet we shall not take them with us, for fear that our turn-out may be requisitioned when we are a hundred miles from anywhere, and we may be obliged to continue our journey on foot.

By eleven o'clock I find that emotion, weariness, and cold have converted me into a wretched, spiritless creature, so I abandon all ideas of sitting up.

Friday, September 18.

This morning is a repetition of yesterday for this distressful town: bombardment, exodus, lowering skies. But yesterday's fog has given place to large clouds driving before a cold wind.

[1] A little later—in November—our friend's son-in-law had his head blown off by a shell in the Avenue de Paris. This disaster made Madame X. decide to leave Reims.

When I came down at seven I found our hostess talking at the open window of the dining-room to one of her neighbours, a merchant who is in close touch with the municipal authorities. He stated that fort Brimont, according to him the only one still in the Germans' hands, has been partly re-captured, and that the whole of it will be ours to-day for certain.

Meanwhile my husband had had the mare put in the carriage. Before saying good-bye, we made a last and vain appeal to Madame X. to let us take her with us. We got into the carriage and drove away. Shall we ever see our old friend again?

Our neighbours have already begun once more their pilgrimage of sorrow. The bom-bardment is fiercer than ever, and seems to get nearer. It is directed beyond the northern suburbs, even beyond the centre of the town. As we cross the Rue Libergier, I put my head out of the carriage hood, as I want to have a last look at the Cathedral. Is it the grey background of clouds that makes it appear so white and lofty? It seems to rise above the earth, to stretch out arms to heaven, like a

kneeling woman, chained by the feet, who at the stake asks for mercy and help.

As we enter the Vesle bridge we meet troops coming into the town. There is a great bustle throughout the suburb. Batteries which arrived during the night are posted there; the cavalry and infantry are moving about or marching off. We have, no doubt, to thank this animation for the fact that we are neither stopped nor interrogated. The cavalry draw aside to let us pass, and the infantry get out of our way with looks that suggest some surprise. But nobody asks us for our passport. We view pityingly the good people of Reims, citizen-martyrs, crowding along the pavements and thus continuing to drain the cup of bitterness which we are trying to put from us.

So here we are at last on the road to Paris. Families and solitary people tramp along at an easy pace, their small parcels in their hands. We question several of them. They are bound for Pargny, Sacy, or any other village in that direction which is not too far away. Reims has become impossible, so they are leaving it for the time. Indeed, the awful song of the

shell is always with us, more and more urgent. Oh, what a relief it will be to hear its cowardly threats no longer! . . .

Our Rosette is in great form, and we soon cover two, three, four kilometres. All foot-passengers have been overtaken; the town is now in the distance. We experience a sense of deliverance, such as one condemned to death no doubt feels when he hears that his sentence has been commuted; such as the soul from Purgatory feels when its repentance is complete and it rises in peace to heaven, regretful only of leaving its still suffering sisters behind it. In front of us, on the horizon, clouds are engaged in combat; eager legions leap to assault fanciful fortresses, driving one against the other, overthrowing one another, and scattering in airy cohorts. The sun comes out, and in its rays the land of Champagne becomes vivid with colour, the wide-spreading country-side wakes to life. And look! on all the roads across the plain is what seems to be a long, motley serpent — reinforcements hurrying to Reims.

Headed by a general, a cavalry division comes up with us, occupying the whole width

of the road. An officer signals us to stop, dismounts, and draws our vehicle aside on to the filled-in ditch beside the road. For a whole hour this cavalry passes in orderly array. The men are silent, and most of them no longer young. Whence come they? In what part of the country have they left their homes, their subsistence, their affections? How many of them will fall to-night or to-morrow, facing the sky or biting the dust? Here they are before me strong and healthy—a trifle sad, perhaps, and wrapped in their thoughts; and I reflect that soon on the battlefield many of them will be taken, immeasurably ennobled by death—their limbs blown off; their heads, with glassy eyes, flung back or swaying right and left on feeble shoulders. I picture this man or that lying wounded, deserted, rendered helpless by his wound, suffering nameless agonies in the rain, hot sun, frost and mud, attacked by venomous flies, waiting for help, calling to the empty air, despairing as he sees his life trickle away with his blood, dying by inches amid the horror of loneliness, or with his accusing conscience rising before his eyes. Unless—worst torture of all—some murderer adds horror

to his martyrdom, and insults him before administering the *coup de grâce*. . . . And then, far from the field of slaughter, in rich houses and cottages, among wandering tribes which own no home nor country, tears will flow, hearts will be wrung by anxiety and the vain waiting for news of the absent one. Some day there will come the official notice that he is dead or missing; and then families will recall many half-forgotten memories of him who has gone, and talk them over. Few tears will be shed, for strength and tears have been exhausted in the long and anxious communings, which caused more pain than perhaps was realised. And the elders—fathers especially—will fail without apparent disease or reason, because their hearts will burn away like the little candles which mothers and sisters burn unceasingly before the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

. . . . . .

Dear soldiers! Gentle and rough, reckless and timid, all of you—generous or selfish, upright or froward, laden with iniquity or sinless; all more or less fallible, martyrs entering the flames—may you come purified from the

furnace! It may be that you will leave this earth as saints—you whose unburied remains will be picked by crows in the sight of your brothers-in-arms; it may be that your guardian angels will lead you back some day to mix again with men.

So my thoughts run on while the cavalry goes by. As soon as the squadron of Moroccans bringing up the rear has passed we resume our journey, and soon find ourselves among other troops, some of which bear down on us, while others from side roads march in the same direction as we.

The farther we get from Reims the more noticeable become the signs of fighting and invasion. In the trampled fields the crops have been burned; carcasses of horses lie about, with swollen bellies, emitting an unendurable stench. Other horses, with their entrails projecting, lie struggling in the agony of death. Others may be seen on their legs, shockingly wounded, and abandoned. Shattered waggons, broken caissons, rims of wheels, and bent tires are scattered about. Here and there the remains of agricultural implements—reapers, rakes, harrows, carts—display their twisted, broken,

rusted ironwork. One even sees furniture—shattered cupboards, glazed cabinets, chairs, tables, meat-safes, ripped and dirty mattresses, American quilts, silken coverlets, sheets, and all other kinds of objects, pillaged from houses and strewn broadcast.

Beside the long pits, the sight of which makes me shudder, all kinds of strange rubbish may be seen—lumps of wadding, fragments of capes, linen rags, bits of leather, trouser legs, tunic sleeves, haversacks, and shapeless objects which stick out of the ground or are flattened in the mud. Also, hung on the briers or rotting in the stubble are ox-skins, paunches, and carcasses, which horrify the nose and make one turn one's head aside. Then there are the deserted bivouacs, varying in arrangement as they are French or German, but all surrounded with the inevitable scraps and ordure. The most striking and universal features of these bivouacs are preserved-meat cans and empty bottles—the last in countless numbers, broken and whole, often in heaps, from the humble pint to the lordly champagne magnum. The vineyards alone seem to have escaped the general pillage—perhaps the pillagers were counting on the

vintage! The uninjured vines rear their bright clusters, tied to the trellis, and the grapes continue quietly to ripen.

The road from Reims to Ville-en-Tardenois passes through but few villages. That of Pargny and some other hamlets which we skirt show us that they have not suffered much by the war: there are no burnt houses, no holed walls and roofs. But other premises standing back from the road seem to be completely ruined. To our left, at the bottom of a charming little dell, is a village of some importance, of which there remains absolutely nothing but rubbish-heaps and a few blackened walls.

The country now lays aside its monotonous flatness and becomes pleasingly varied. We pass a splendid hedge. In a clearing, a hospital has been installed and is at work. The waggons are concealed under the trees. Ambulance waggons pass in and out with curtains drawn. We can still hear the cannonade quite plainly, but it is not what it was two hours ago. Yet every now and then I ask the soldiers whom we meet whether there is any fighting in the direction in which we are going. "Where is that?" I am asked. "To Paris." "Keep

straight ahead, and don't be afraid; there is no danger." This with a broad smile, full of confidence and pride.

As we jog along we are followed by a detachment of cyclists, who, with their carbines on their backs and in their dark uniforms, crouch over their slender machines, and make us think of huge black ants migrating. They ride by our side, pass us, stop. We pass them in turn; they catch us up; and so on *ad infinitum.* In absolute silence the riders trundle ahead of us on their noiseless tires in Indian file, on both sides of the road; or at the also silent command close up in two ranks, halt all together, stand still for a minute, mount as one man, spread out into a swallow-tail formation, ride quickly, join up, stop; and keep on repeating the same manœuvre in perfect order and without the least noise. It seems almost grotesque. Farther on we get among convoys, details of all arms, travelling in all directions, without haste, anxiety, anger, or gaiety. This, then, is what happens behind the lines of a battle front.

Ville-en-Tardenois. The village does not appear to have suffered much. To-day it is

bursting with soldiers. We stop here to give our mare her oats. Villagers and soldiers, on hearing that we are from Reims, come and question us while Rosette is eating. We are the first arrivals from yonder since the invasion began. Our news arouses much interest and consternation. We end up by telling them of the hellish revel which has been audible for some days past, and which seems to increase its violence as we speak. However, we have no time to waste in chatter, for we are determined to reach Dormans to-day, in the hope that, forty-five kilometres from the firing line, we may be able to find a lodging.

Now at last we are in Tardenois. Ahead of us lie pretty stretches of country under a bright sky. Along the road itself runs a narrow-gauge light railway connecting Ville with Dormans—though to-day, I should point out, it connects nothing. All the stations passed have been burned or smashed up, and the telegraph posts and wires have been pulled down and broken. One can make out burned waggons and heaps of iron which once were locomotives. Stations which afford any semblance of shelter have been turned to

account as dressing-stations for the wounded—witness the beds of straw and other indications. Almost wheresoever one looks, the charm of the countryside is spoilt by the hateful marks of war. You cannot see in the fields a single labourer, a single head of cattle. One might believe agriculture to be dead, and all the workers carried off into captivity. As for civilians, we are absolutely the only ones on the road. On the outskirts of Ville-en-Tardenois quite a number of officers' cars overtake or meet us. And now, though the comings and goings of troops have almost ceased, as a set-off Parisian commissariat motor omnibuses dog us with their massive bulk and noisy rush. They come up behind in a way that suggests that they want to pulverise us; the macadam shakes under their wheels, and they manage to raise clouds of dust on a road which is yet hardly dry from the rain which soaked it yesterday. One behind the other, these good-natured monsters overtake us. Some of them are in trouble and emit loud groans.

At Romigny, where a General Staff is quartered, we are called upon for the first time

to show our passports. The only ones we have are those given us at Roche twenty days ago, and we naturally feel a bit nervous as we produce them. No objections as to their validity are raised, but instead of being allowed to go straight ahead we have to take a farm track which skirts the village and picks up the main road again a little farther on. From this point onward we are no longer troubled by the movements of officers' cars, though the motor buses continue to annoy us.

We pass a succession of villages, each more devastated than the last. Locked houses, probably abandoned by their inhabitants, have been broken into, as we can see. On barn doors are inscriptions in German. Many of these, with arrows and the word "Paris," tell in chalk or charcoal the wish, the anxiety, the dream of those who wrote them. In some cases words or notes of exclamation emphasise the wish and speak of the haste and enthusiasm of the conqueror. We ask people met in these villages whether they have suffered much at the hands of the Germans. The enemy's army, so we are told, merely went through and back again. It did not commit any serious

personal violence, but the annoyance and pillage for which it was responsible is incalculable. Whip or revolver in hand, the invader issued his demands; the invaded had simply to obey, if they wished to avoid trouble. Yet the children were a protection, and for their sakes mothers were not robbed. We were shown the interior of a very humble home from which the tenants had fled. Everything in indescribable disorder; the iron bedstead twisted, bent double, broken; the table smashed and legless; chairs in fragments; the contents of burst-in or destroyed cupboards lying jumbled on the floor, ripped, rumpled, fouled with excrement, and sprinkled with empty bottles. And over everything a vaguely repugnant dust.

As we approach Verneuil, the last village before Dormans, we pass the scene of a fight in which perished three hundred Germans and about sixty French. One feels a sharp pang on seeing on both sides of the road mounds surmounted by crosses on which hang here a képi, there a sword-belt, there a piece of uniform cloth. We look at the French graves only. The others must be those broad swellings in the ground which we can see.

The houses of Verneuil have been severely damaged. They must have been organised as fortresses, for many of them are loopholed. Gables and roofs have been riddled by shells. We pass close to the church, which too has by no means escaped injury. Beside it we see a large pool in which a priest of advanced age with soutane tucked up and legs and feet bare, and helped by some old men apparently under his directions, is excavating with a shovel and hook. A group of women and children standing near the pool watch with a strained curiosity the results of the search.

The chilly evening is drawing on when the red roofs of Dormans come in sight on the horizon. Before we reach the place we have a nice little surprise, for in the ditch at the roadside is a cart resting on its shafts, while its horse turns up a plot of potatoes with a mechanical hoe. A young girl leads the poor, half-starved animal, and a boy is at the handles. Their mother and little brothers gather the tubers and put them in sacks. At the sight I cannot restrain a cry of joy: there are still peasants and horses left to cultivate the ground!

So here we are entering Dormans. The ancient townlet of the *sleepers* is very busy, being the headquarters of a commissariat *étape*. The crescent of vine-covered hills that half surrounds it wears the copper tints of autumn. The meadows beside the Marne at its feet are greener than emeralds in the setting sun, whose reflections redden the river and its inlets and tint the whole town a very delicate pink. But it is not easy to get into Dormans this evening. The motor buses and motor waggons which overtook us on the road are drawn up in the main road and literally block it, and we have to stop. Other motor lorries come in behind us and halt in turn, so that we are penned in, unable to go forward or backward or sideways. Pierre leaves the carriage and tries to arrange a passage for us.

It takes some time to get clear; consequently night is falling when we reach the centre of the town. Not a bed to be had in the inns. An obliging passer-by advises us to push on to Tréloup, two kilometres away, and gives us the address of a friend who keeps an inn in that village. At the entry to the suspension bridge over the Marne territorial guards demand

our passports. After we have explained our being so late on the road, the old date on our papers, and why we are going to Tréloup—which is not included in our itinerary—we are allowed to proceed.

Our lampless carriage rolls onward through the night along the hardly distinguishable strip of road; and the noise we make would be the only one in this deserted countryside but for the dull, regular reports which prove that the martyrdom of Reims is not yet at an end.

Saturday, September 13.

Tréloup. What peace and general relief the halt here brought with it after what we have gone through lately! The innkeeper and his wife gave us a warm welcome. After putting our carriage under cover and seeing to Rosette's comfort, we sat down to the good steaming broth and were able to satisfy our hunger at our leisure. Then came a comfortable bed in which we could sleep without fear of shells; a sense of safety which heals the body and gives the spirit the illusion of peace. I felt anxious as to the effect on Pierre of the fatigue of our journey; but God had watched over us,

and my husband felt none the worse, but even better than before

The inn houses also a family of landowners from the north of the Ardennes. They arrived yesterday a few hours before us, after driving about at random for four weeks. Eight days ago they were in the Yonne Department, whence they came here, hoping soon to regain the Rocroi *arrondissement* in the track of the French army. The family consists of five people: mother, father, their daughter and two of her children. The young woman's husband, brother and brother-in-law are serving in the firing line, like most Ardennes people of the same classes. They have no definite news of them, but information that has come to hand indirectly gives reason to fear that they have been killed by the enemy or are missing. The mother, well advanced in years, is suffering from a trouble that requires surgical treatment; but this is long overdue, because they do not know where to take her to be operated upon.[1]

[1] In 1915 I got news that this lady was in hospital in Paris. I found her at Saint-Antoine, very ill, exhausted by grief and privation, and in a condition which had rendered an operation

These people fled from their property during the second half of August, when from the blazing north and east distraught witnesses of the massacres and burnings in Belgium, at Dinant and elsewhere, were retreating in panic before the Germans. They left without taking with them or hiding their securities, jewels or title-deeds, or giving a thought for their relatives, friends, or neighbours; being anxious merely to save their own lives and those of their children. They only know that the young woman's almost blind mother-in-law was getting ready to leave with her helpless father. They have no idea where the infirm pair fled to. A hundred or so horses were left behind in the meadows and stables, several of them destined for the Government studs. The small sum of money they brought away with them is almost exhausted. They are not in receipt of relief, as they have not asked for or even thought of it. And the cold days are close at hand when warm clothing will be needed! Their only possession now is a thoroughbred stallion, the

out of the question. She told me that her son and son-in-law had been killed in August 1914. She died soon after entering the hospital.

apple of his master's eye, which goes like the wind and draws their overloaded phaeton along the roads that lead them into exile. They are typical of the thousands of frontier families which are periodically brought face to face with invasion, misery and ruin.

There are no soldiers or noises in Tréloup. I go out of doors, eager to breathe the clean air of this corner of France, half in Champagne, half in Brie. The village is old-fashioned throughout, and huddled under its high-pitched thatch or tiled roofs. It contains a fine Roman church, the doors of which stand open, though it is not at present served by a priest. Below in the valley runs the Marne, a diamond amid the jewelled setting of the meadows. On the sides of the surrounding hills are hamlets embowered among vineyards, gardens, cultivated fields, and spinneys all blue and gold. I might well imagine myself to be in an earthly paradise, did I not find in the orchards adjoining the village the remains of bivouacs, and if the hills did not echo the distant cannonade. The villagers listening to it on their doorsteps say that they have never heard a bombardment like that of this morning. No papers or letters

are delivered here, as the postal services have ceased; and if one wants news one must get a return passport and go to Dormans, where all that one learns of the war is what the military authorities publish in the *Bulletin des Armées*.

After nightfall we gather round the inn's wide fireplace, in which crackles a fire of vine-stocks. While supper is preparing, the inn-keeper chats with us and describes the invasion of Tréloup. Occasionally a customer comes in, sits down by the hearth, contributes his little tale, and listens to his neighbour's. It is just like old times, with their winter evenings and stories of highwaymen. According to some of the people to whom we are now listening, a band of dismounted Uhlans lurked in the woods round about, and terrorised the occupants of the lonely farms from which they got supplies by stealth. In the morning cows were found to have been milked, and hen-roosts robbed; and on returning from the fields folk found the bread-bins and pickle-tubs empty. Sometimes, we were told, the marauders left money on the table in payment for what they took. But the marauders' tracks have been found, and there is talk of organising a battue and hunting them

down—even of setting the woods on fire, if necessary. Alas! the resolute men needed for carrying out these schemes are lacking, and the police have plenty of other things to attend to.

Tréloup did not suffer greatly from the passing through of the Germans. Its inhabited houses were not broken into. The Germans arrived at noon in clouds, like a whirlwind, and spread through the streets, a hunger-stricken crowd, and entered houses where people were just sitting down to dinner. They laid hands on all food on the table or being prepared, on the contents of the sideboards, and on eatables of every kind. They clamorously demanded bread; and as for drink, the number of empty bottles scattered in the streets and gardens proves better than any words that it was not paid for. The victuals gobbled up and the great afternoon heat over, the storm passed on towards Château-Thierry and Paris, while the village folk, expecting the arrival of other German columns and ignorant of what was going on all round them, got under cover, terror-stricken by the roar of the guns. Six days later, the grey cloud was moving in the

opposite direction in good order, but ingloriously. The troops kept to the main street and passed through continuously for a whole day and night. The last German soldiers had hardly left Tréloup when the first French appeared at the other end of the village, and the tremendous pursuit continued as far as the eye could see, amid the cheers of the population, now reassured, but not yet venturing to celebrate its definite deliverance.

As we were retiring to bed after all these tales and supper, the darkness of the night was lit up to the north-east by a glare of violet colour. The cutting wind bore to our ears from afar a kind of despairing clamour, like that of a number of bells being rung down.

Sunday, September 20.

At Dormans, whither the emigrant from Ardennes has driven us, we were told that Reims Cathedral had been ablaze since yesterday evening. Does this crime explain the ominous glare we saw and the wailing noise we heard? Oh! I cannot believe it! Whatever be the facts, if one stands and listens in the open country the bombardment seems to have

slackened to-day. Our hosts at Tréloup maintain that the noise of the firing now comes from the Soissons direction.

Monday, September 21.

A signplate at the end of the village bears these two names hyphened together: Tréloup-Violaine. What a curious combination of words! The first is harsh and suggests ferocity; the second is sweet and speaks of mystical beauty. It reminds us of a dear friend of whom we have no news, and whose fate gives us good cause for anxiety. So much so, that my husband has an idea of going to Fère-en-Tardenois, seven kilometres away, where our friend's family lives; while I should like to know the origin of the name Violaine, which we have already seen on the front of a ruined station. Paul Claudel's thought comes to memory, and we murmur those words which sprang from his brilliant soul. We would gladly stay here a fortnight, a month, to breathe this country air, in which bloom the flowers of health, in which we could recuperate our confidence and strength.

In the afternoon we go to Dormans, and

there receive confirmation of the burning of Reims Cathedral. There can no longer be any doubt about the disaster: it is proved by eye-witnesses, fugitives from Reims. In a moment disappear the brightness of the sun and landscape, the joy of living, and give place to the wish, the need, for tears, and for isolating ourselves in the only place where isolation is possible—Paris.

It so happens that at nine a.m. to-morrow a train for Paris will for the first time be available for travellers without luggage. We shall take it.

Tuesday, September 22.

We have been driven to Dormans station. Sky and earth are looking their best, as though desirous of making us adhere to our original wish to stay at Tréloup. The silver ribbon of the Marne spreads itself in sparkling mist over the meadows. Every roof in Dormans shows ruddily. The red vineyards and flaming woods embellish the hillsides, and stretch away into the dim distance like many-coloured clouds. Behind Dormans, half-way up a hill, is a great house—a château, doubtless—among the trees, reflecting the sun from all its windows, and

looking like a great beetle on its back struggling to regain its feet.

Nelly is not with us. She prefers to wait in Tréloup, with Hélène and the Ardennes family, for the liberation of the Ardennes, which, they believe unanimously, is not far off. As soon as it happens, our two nieces will go back with the folk from Rocroi in their carriage, drawn by the good Rosette.

There are but few people at the station, where we are asked for recently viséd passports. Travellers on the departure platform discuss the bombardment of Reims and the burning of its Cathedral. A territorial officer in charge of the station spends his spare moments talking with some people from Dormans close to us waiting for the train. We gather from his talk that he lives at the château. When asked what happened when the Germans were in Dormans, he says that he had a colonel billeted on him during the occupation. He thought that he must go to some expense in entertaining this high officer and his suite, not merely out of respect for the rank of his guest, but in the hope that any satisfaction he might feel would act as a protection to the *objets d'art*

in the château. So he had placed his finest rooms at the disposal of the German veteran, rooms furnished with valuable collections, and had entertained him like a prince. The colonel expressed himself charmed by his reception. What, then, were the host's surprise and indignation on finding, after the officer had departed, that his marquetry furniture had been cracked and broken, and that their valuable contents, as well as the finest *bibelots* adorning the room, had been stolen!

The train which is to bear us away at last enters the station—a train filled with wounded, to which has been coupled a carriage for civilian travellers. We enter this, and the train leaves.

Of course it is quite out of the question to take the direct route to Paris. The bridges have been blown up in many places and are not yet repaired. Also, the railway company does not guarantee our reaching our destination, for at Dormans booking-office we were given tickets only to Epernay. It is not without some misgiving that I realise that, instead of getting farther from Reims, we are approaching it.

Epernay station, which we reach at eleven o'clock, is entirely without officials. After getting out on to the platform the travellers do not know what is to happen next. Finally, a commissioner appears and exchanges our tickets for some words in writing, and asks us to take the subway to the platform where passengers for Châlons-sur-Marne will be collected. It occurs to me that at Châlons we shall still be thirty to forty miles from Paris. Meanwhile there is no time fixed for leaving, and we simply have to be ready to get aboard when we are called. During our wait some military trains come in, stop for a minute or so, and steam out again. Some daring travellers climb on to the steps of the half-open goods waggons, and are carried gratis in the direction which they select.

At one or half-past we get aboard for Châlons. In spite of the unpleasant feeling that we are going the wrong way, I am so worn-out, cold and hungry that I close my eyes and sink into a half-sleep which is interrupted by cries from my neighbours, who have their heads at the windows and are looking for signs of war as we go along.

When we get to Châlons the thing I wish for above all others is to get warm again. A porter tells us that we shall have to wait till the evening for the Paris train *via* Troyes. So we have plenty of time in front of us.

The town of Châlons-sur-Marne, near the famous camp, always lives on the soldiers. The station approaches are more liberally provided with restaurants, hotels and cafés than those of any other town. But to-day, "owing to exhaustion of stocks," as the placards inform us, all these establishments are closed. We venture out into the town. We are welcomed at one of the three or four cafés still open, but—the placards again—"Reserved for officers only." There is nothing to eat. In a dirty, slop-stained room where half a dozen depressed-looking subalterns are having a drink, we are served with a nauseous liquid which goes by the name of coffee. We certainly could not drink it if it were not warm, and if we did not nibble some chocolate tablets to help it down.

After this mockery of refreshments we return to the station. The entry hall and waiting-

rooms were used for the wounded until after the German occupation. The phenol sprinkled about has not succeeded in expelling the musty smell of dirty linen, blood, mucus and rotten straw. Here predominates the odour of death. It follows us outside when, still waiting for the train, we sit down on benches under the trees of the square.

A very aged woman, pale and thin and sad-faced, and wearing a white cap, has seated herself in the sunshine on a wicker basket against the station wall, where she shivers and waits. Many soldiers move about around us freely or in ranks. Two slightly wounded ones are chatting merrily on our seat. Back to back with us a queer being has just planted herself. Her head is bare and her black hair done in "heart-breakers"; she is painted, reeks of scent, is clad in red and yellow tinsel, and tricked out with trashy gewgaws of large size. Every now and then she gets up and moves slowly in vulgarly, licentiously voluptuous attitudes, stretches herself, and sits down again. Some detachment of territorials, detrained at the goods station, march along beyond the trees; while others pass them on their way to entrain-

ing. The later it gets, the greater becomes this ebb and flow.

The time drags slowly by. The crowd grows dense. An official appears at the station gateway and we are informed that he will hand out the tickets there. The crowd presses towards him and we follow it. Not a soul is left on the seats in the square. The woman in yellow and red has risen and moves lazily towards the hovels facing the station. At last we are allowed on to the platform and get into the train, which, packed full, draws out at about six o'clock.

Not only are all seats occupied in the compartments, but the corridors are filled with gangers and railwaymen on their way to resume work in places now freed from Germans. On the seat opposite us is a group of six people from Reims. The pale old woman whom we noticed in the afternoon is one of them. We start a conversation. They saw the Cathedral burning. The look on their faces as they describe the sight is one of terror, and tears run down their cheeks. We question them closely, perhaps even inconsiderately. They can find no words to describe in proper detail

the destruction of Notre-Dame—the horror of it was beyond description. As they lived close to the great church, they might have followed all stages of the drama from their windows, but that day they were sheltering in their cellar, and only occasionally did one of them venture up to see what was happening outside. Between four and five in the afternoon the Cathedral, which had a ring of conflagrations about it, took fire, and in a few moments it seemed to be a mass of flames. Our travelling companions had been kept in Reims by the infirmity of the old lady of eighty-four, who had received the last sacraments two days previously ; but now they were compelled to flee from the fiery furnace. They dared not go upstairs to fetch anything, but set off with only a dim idea of what direction they should take. To get the old octogenarian away they used their united efforts, carrying, helping, and dragging her along in relays through a panic-stricken crowd pouring out of the town in the fire-reddened night. When they reached the country, the woman who was dying two days before set to work—was it the strength given by the instinct of self-preservation, or a miracle?—to walk

along the Epernay road, and in two days, with the help of her friends, she tramped the twenty-four kilometres from Reims to Châlons.

Slowly and joltingly the train bears us through the Catalaunian Plains. Territorials guard the railway and the temporarily-repaired bridges. Demolished stations, the débris of charred waggons, of which only the iron frame remains, and heaps of rubbish scattered about the country speak of happenings in the war, on which the travellers enlarge. The dusk becomes darker, and the cold in the train begins to intensify. The railway guards have lighted small fires under cover of fences and ruins to warm themselves at.

In this rocky district of Champagne one arid plain succeeds another, dotted as far as the eye can see by fantastically-shaped dwarf pines. Great yawning holes show where shells have fallen. Here and there dead horses may still be seen, and one looks for the bodies of soldiers, but they have already been removed and buried.

It is now pitch dark, and the train does not carry a single light. The sound of the name Sommesous makes passengers get up and go

to the windows. The night hides all signs of the great battle, but one can imagine white and black ruins, burnt equipment, shell-holes, and everywhere the disturbing objects seen on other battlefields.

The excitement is over. The travellers, whether asleep or meditating, have ceased talking. It is a time of inexpressible sadness. Now and again my heart stops beating, and I fancy myself dead and being borne in a coffin to a far-distant cemetery; then it begins beating violently again, and my head throbs like a disordered pile-driver. This would be intolerable but for the occasional flashing of a lantern beside the rails—a territorial exchanging signals with the train staff.

Midnight has almost come when we reach Troyes station. Here we have to get out and wait two hours in a nipping cold for the morning train to Paris. We may not go into the waiting-rooms, and the buffet is closed; but the travellers are many, and we manage to keep warm. Some officers from Saint-Cyr, who have returned from the front, chat close to us; they are going to the central depôts to train recruits.

The journey from Troyes to Paris, long

though it be, is less depressing than that from Châlons. The carriages are lit with oil lamps; we are beyond risk of disaster—beyond districts ravaged by the war. When we reach Noisy-le-Sec, white with frost, at sunrise, to the noise of shunting waggons, one seems to wake from an heroic, monstrous nightmare. But the presence of soldiers and cannon-laden trains soon brings one back to the reality of the war.

The clock in the Eastern station at Paris points to eight o'clock as we reach our destination on Wednesday, September 23, 1914.

Paris sleeps, or is deserted—unless it be dead.

It takes us a long time to find an open café, and when at last one is discovered, we see, the moment we enter it, that it is not what it once was. Yet the feature of the disaster that most worries the proprietor is the falling off in business. Vehicles, too, are few in number. But presently we are able to hail a taxi, and so for Auteuil!

Paris sleeps.

Along our route the flats, stores and workshops are all closed. But the monuments have been saved untouched, and dream on, more

enchanting than ever. In their presence I feel the worshipping love such as one has for dear ones whom one fears to be dead but finds hale and hearty and stronger than ever. Like a stately, lovely girl saved from a mortal illness, the city, freshened, purified, ennobled,—the city, with the frank eyes under its closed lids, the beloved, wonderful city,—is lapped in the salutary languor of convalescence, unconscious of, not even fearing, the danger which she has just escaped, or of the huge, incalculable price paid for her healing.

Paris sleeps. . . .

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